Principia et documenta Vitæ Christianæ

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If any man will com after me let him
deny him self and take up his Cross
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PRECEPTS
AND
Practical Rules
FOR
A truly Christian Life.
BEING
A Summary of Excellent Directions to follow the narrow way to BLISS.

In two PARTS.

Written Originally in Latin

By *JOHN BONA.*

Englished by *L. B.*

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MDCLXXVIII.

T.L.

TO

The Reverend

Mr. *Thomas Ken*,

PREBENDARY

OF THE

Church of *Winton*, &c.

SIR,

YOU are known to be a Perſon of a very Charitable and Generous Spirit, ready and deſirous to oblige the publick: yet had you been aware your commendation of this Book, would

have drawn upon you the trouble of this addreſs, it may well be doubted whether you would not have kept it ſecret to your ſelf, without promoting its being divulg'd in our vulgar tongue, for the benefit of others. But Sir, that you may not repent this good deed, I will ſpare you as much as is poſſible, and leave it ſtill to publick fame to proclaim your great worth: only pray give me leave to offer that to you, to which you had

moſt

moſt right. It will not only be an Act of juſtice, but a kindneſs alſo to them that love good Books: For they will be ſure this is one, when they ſhall know, ſo Pious and ſo Learned a man, hath recommended it for ſuch. And I may well expect, this will prevail with others to read it gladly, when it was that made me undertake the greater trouble of Tranſlating of it.

I know not whether I ſhould deprecate for the more

more than uſual liberty I have in ſome places taken: but Sir, either I could not follow my Reader in his too lofty flight: or elſe I thought plainneſs might be of a more general uſefulneſs: or it may be I judg'd it convenient that ſpeaking another language, he ſhould ſomewhat alter his ſentiments. It may be no difficult matter to win a *Janſeniſt* not now biaſt by worldly Conſiderations: and however 'tis a good work to draw a good man from

from a bad party. So that I am almoſt confident that what I have done in this, will not only have your pardon, but your approbation alſo: and then I ſhall not need fear the cenſure of any judicious Reader.

Sir, I am well aſſur'd, your name will more than anſwer all the objections that might be raiſed againſt this Book on the account of its Author; as for the matter of it, 'tis moſt excellent; and if my Tranſlation be but tolerable, it cannot

but do good, and be acceptable to all good Chriſtians. I know 'twas your deſign it ſhould, and I wiſh it may: and that this Dedication may be looked upon as a Teſtimony of my great reſpects for you, worthy Sir, whom unknown I honour, as a Perſon well known to deſerve it, remaining

SIR,

Your humble Servant

L. B.

THE
Tranſlators Preface
TO THE
READER.

I Know we have great plenty of good Books already, but the number of the bad ones increaſeth daily, and we muſt not ſuffer the tares to choak the good ſeed: for the new ones are read and enquired after, though for nothing but meerly Novelty. I know likewiſe that for the beſt of modern Authors, we need not be beholden to ſtrangers, we have many of our own, more excellent than

than any can come from abroad: But why ſhould we be greedy of ſuch forein things as miniſter to vanity, and neglect ſuch as advance true goodneſs? Why ſhould we teach Poets and Romancers to ſpeak the Engliſh Tongue, and not acquaint Chriſtian Philoſophers with the graces of it: If I wanted Apologies for this Tranſlation, ſuch as theſe would ſufficiently plead for it: but indeed I rather want words to ſet forth its due praiſe, for 'tis very good in it ſelf, and deſigned to a good end; I mean the inſtructions of it, which if attended to, cannot but be very ſerviceable, in promoting Holineſs and true Religion.

I know ſome will be ready to ask with Nathaniel, *John* 1. 46. Can there any good thing come out

out of *Nazareth? But I Anſwer with St.* Philip, Come and ſee. *Believe not my report, but come and ſatisfie thy ſelf, and judge as thou ſhalt find cauſe. 'Tis true we may not go to ſchool to the Devil: but we may receive truth from whenceſoever it comes. I mean only that we ſhould not ſeek to diſſenters, to learn from them thoſe things wherein we diſagree: but in thoſe things which we know to be true, we may uſe their counſel and their aſſiſtance: and we are all agreed that unfeigned holineſs and Chriſtian vertues are abſolutely requiſite to make us true Chriſtians, and to make us happy. We may therefore uſe all ſuch means as tend to this end, without inquiring whence they come;* Iſraelites *may go down to the* Philiſtines

liſtines, *to ſharpen their mattocks, their ſhares and their axes: and where we know the right way, there is no danger in being forwarded therein, by any ſtrangers help.*

'Tis not to be denied but that the Church of Rome *maintains many Doctrines very injurious to God, and deſtructive of Holineſs and true Piety: but withal, it muſt be granted that many of her members admit not of the direful conſequents, but ſtill believe and preſs the neceſſity of a good life, and obedience to the Goſpel-precepts: and were it not for this 'twould be impoſſible for any good man to live in ſo erroneous and ſo corrupt a ſociety. But however, fear not to read and to follow the Chriſtian Directions contained in this Book: for it hath paſt*

through

through such hands, as would not have made it publick, but for a publick advantage: and withal, it is not so much the Authors composure, as his Collection from Ancienter and more Orthodox Writers.

But Blessed God! how different are the tempers and procedures of men? Not a few in the Roman *Church, are grieved for, and very sensible of the corruptions crept in, and establisht amongst them; and yet they are meek and peaceable, silent and subject under their worst Constitutions: and this purest of Churches, the Church of* England, *against which nothing reasonable can be objected, is clamour'd against, torn and distracted, even by some that would be thought the best of Protestants.*

Proteſtants. There they impoſe a heavy yoke, and teach things apparently deſign'd to gratifie their Pride and their Ambition; and yet they are obey'd: here the Church is indulgent, and plainly aims at nothing, but the Salvation of Souls and the Glory of God; and yet it is rebel'd againſt and perſecuted. And I profeſs, but that the Goſpel it ſelf is ſlighted, and Heaven not cared for, I muſt eternally wonder, that the Church of England *is not lov'd and reverenc'd, and moſt gladly follow'd, by all that have the happineſs to live within the limits of her incloſure.*

But I ſay, this wonder muſt ceaſe, when we conſider that men can ſtand out againſt the mercies of their Redemption, the infinite

Love

Love and Charity of the Bleſſed Jeſus, *and the glorious rewards and promiſes offered to all that will be true Chriſtians. While men ſhall be ſo ſtupid as to neglect theſe, 'twill be no hard matter to impoſe upon them: and it muſt not ſeem ſtrange that the means are deſpiſed, where the end it ſelf is diſregarded. Until Chriſtians make it their firſt and chiefeſt buſineſs, to ſecure a bleſſed Eternity, by living holy lives, it cannot be expected they ſhould make wiſe and ſerious enquiries into thoſe truths which are more diſputable and leſs neceſſary. For the mixing ſecular intereſts with things of Religion, firſt made, and ſtill maintains the errors and breaches of the Chriſtian world: and the way to bring to an end many controverſies,*

troverſies, is not ſo much to decide as to bury them; at leaſt to make them give place to thoſe things, which are much more plain, and much more requiſite and beneficial.

And here again, I might have a juſt occaſion to commend this Church we live in, for the beſt guide of Souls: for either ſhe meddles not with many diſputes, or elſe ſhe always ſtands on the much ſurer ſide of the queſtion: holding that which even her Adverſaries cannot but acknowledge for truth: and never amuſing her Children with unneceſſary ſpeculations, or unprofitable conteſts. But as it is her great deſign to make us obedient to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and bring us to a ſincere practice of all holy vertues: ſo I

ſhall

ſhall conclude this Preface, with an Exhortation to the ſame purpoſe.

That thou wouldeſt ſeriouſly and often conſider, that thy life is ſhort and uncertain, and that the world paſſeth away, and all things here below: and that thou reſolve thereupon, not to loſe, not to venture thy portion of good things above, for any earthly enjoyment. That thou wouldeſt bear Eternity in mind, and weigh the importance of theſe two words, which conclude our Creed, Life Everlaſting: *and that afterwards thou reſolve carefully to follow the way that leads to it; the Doctrine and Example of our Bleſſed Saviour, who hath purchaſt and promiſt it, to all that love and follow him. Live therefore as one that follows*

the

the King of Eternity, to a bleſſed Eternity: and deſpiſe the world. Uſe diligently ſuch means as will make thee know thy duty, and incourage and aſſiſt thee in the diſcharge of it: and amongſt them good Books, which read with attention, and a deſign to make their goodneſs our own, are very uſeful inſtruments of Vertue and Religion. This I hope will ſomewhat conduce to their advancement; Nay, I am ſure thou ſhalt be much better'd by it, if thou wilt tranſcribe it with thy Life, as I have with my Pen: and make it thy hearty Endeavour, as I do my Prayer.

L. B.

THE
Authors Dedication
TO ALL
TRUE CHRISTIANS.

WIth due Reverence, I offer this ſmall volume to you bleſſed Souls, veſſels of honour and mercy, elect and holy, Children of God predeſtinated to glory before the foundation of the World: who being redeemed from death by the bloud of Chriſt, and from ſin, by the gift of grace, are not aſham'd to own the deſpiſed Croſs of your Redeemer. For to you it is given to know the myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; to you *that are not born of bloud, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* You are call'd by the Father to

to a portion of the inheritance of the Saints in light, that ye might be holy and unreprovable in his ſight in love: and in Chriſt you are choſen, according to the purpoſe and good pleaſure of God, not for your own works and merits. For you the Bleſſed *Jeſus* prayed, when being ready to leave the world and go to the Father, he ſaid, *I have manifeſted thy name unto the men whom thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were and thou gaveſt them me. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine.*

He prayed not for the world, becauſe all that is in it, the luſt of the fleſh, the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father. And therefore they that are of the world hear not, or at leaſt will not regard and underſtand the words of eternal life, for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. And though Chriſt be the true light which lightens every man

that

that comes into the world, yet the world sees him not, nor knows him, neither can it receive the spirit of truth. On this will be grounded the just judgment of the wicked, *This will be their condemnation, that light came into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil, and every one that doth evil hateth the light.*

Now if Christ was a light in his life and doctrine, he was so much more in his sufferings; he did shine on the Cross most gloriously to all the world. The tree of death to which he was tyed, became his pulpit whence he preached his divinest Sermons, teaching us that great lesson dying, which he let while he was alive: *He that doth not take up my Cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple.* Therefore to take up our Cross and follow *Jesus*, is our greatest safety as well as duty, our surest title to glory; the Cross is the highest pitch of Christian learning, *to know Jesus Christ and him Crucified.*

I heartily wiſh that they that ſhall read the enſuing Precepts and Practical Rules may have ſanctified affections and a clear underſtanding, that by the divine grace they may be brought to know and to follow the truth. And my prayer for them is, that God would ſtrengthen them by his good Spirit in the inner man, that love may abound in them more and more, and that they may be ſincere and unblameable, repleniſht with the fruits of righteouſneſs, pleaſing to God in all things, without contention and without offence. I alſo beg for my ſelf of the divine goodneſs, that the glorious light of Chriſt may enlighten and guide my mind, and that his ſtrength may be perfected in my weakneſs, leſt after having preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould become a caſt-away, by acting contrary to my own inſtructions. And therefore I alſo beſeech you, good friends of God, Bleſſed Chriſtians, who are the ſheep of his Paſture, remember me in your

your Prayers, that what I teach I may fulfil; that the precepts contained in this Book may be my practice, by his divine grace and assistance, *without whom we can do nothing*, who with the Father and the Holy-Ghost, liveth and reigneth one ever glorious and adored God. *Amen.*

(a) IMPRI-

Imprimatur.

Geo. Hooper.
R. P. D. *GIL.* Ep.
Cant. à Sacris Dom.

May 29. 1677.

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PRE-

PRECEPTS AND Practical Rules FOR A truly Christian Life.

PART I.

Of the Christian Life, and of its end and offices.

CHAP. I.

Of the distribution of all Christians into three ranks; good, middle-sort, and bad.

1. WHen in my meditation as from a watch-tower, I consider the whole multitude of Christians in the universal Church, with their manners and principles, they appear to

me as divided into three distinct bands or orders. The first contains them who following the doctrin of *Christ* and his blessed example with a sincere and hearty affection, and daily reaching forward towards the highest pitch of Evangelical perfection, thereby approve themselves to be Christians indeed; constantly serving God, and meditating in his Law, they crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts, and are not cast down by adversity, nor puft up by a prosperous fortune. Now among these, some are more eminent in virtue than the rest, and seem to be even more than men; abstaining from all delicious fare, and being temperate even to a perpetual fast; keeping themselves pure and unspotted even to the refusing of lawful pleasures; exercising themselves in patience, so as to go manfully through fire and the worst of pains; mortifying and denying themselves, as being their own enemies; despising wealth and riches, so as freely to bestow in charity all that they possess; being filled with the love of God, as much as is possible in this life; and possessing all virtues in the highest degree, so as to be the admiration rather than the example of others, who with shame acknowledge their own weakness, when they consider how far short they fall of these Heroick Christians. But the number of these

is

is not great, and they are commonly unknown, *being dead and crucified to themselves and the world, their conversation being in Heaven, and their life hid with Christ in God.*

2. In the next rank are they who rest in the profession of the true faith, and think that all Christian duties consist in outward acts; they fear God, and yet retain and worship their secret Idols; they often come to the Sacrament, but with so much unpreparedness and indevotion, that their frequent receiving profits them not; they abstain from great and crying sins, and neglect lesser; outward Acts of Religion they omit not, but their affections are immerst in the World, they are acted by Self-love and Self-interest, and they are unacquainted with the inward peace and beauty of a Spiritual life; they know not what it is to indeavour after Christian perfection; they are, and will be strangers to that Heavenly mindedness and renouncing of all things, without which *Christ* declares none can be his Disciple; and so sadly deluded they are, so unhappily besotted with inconsideration, that if you exhort them to a stricter and more holy life, they will bid you go and preach to Monks and Hermits, and remain unconcern'd and the same as before.

3. In the last order come all such as are called Christians, onely because born of

Christian Parents and Baptized; their Lives and Actions being scandalous, and they themselves wicked and abominable, worse than infidels; of these, the number is great and innumerable.

CHAP. II.

A further Description of the Wicked and their Wickedness.

1. THese are they that confess God with their mouth and constantly deny him with their deeds, who so study to gratifie their appetites, and so resolvedly live after the flesh and the sinful customs of the World, that the revelations and laws of the Gospel can make no impression on them, they being rather asham'd and almost sorry that they are Christians. They daily indulge to their Lusts, and their vilanies growing customary deprive them of all sense of human modesty. They relish nothing but the Earth; they take their account of good and evil by carnal pleasures, and they so order the course of their lives that like brutes they follow nothing but their bodily senses. Riches they value at a mighty rate, and right or wrong seek to obtain them; they esteem nothing base and unworthy

unworthy that advanceth their profit or their preferment; and as one said of some Greeks, *they build as though they were never to die, and live as if they were weary of their life.*

2. This they do, because they believe not what our blessed Lord hath reveal'd, and because being unmindful of the uncertainty of our condition, they promise themselves many years to live. They rest satisfied with the injoyment of transitory things, which soon shall be possest by others: and things that abide for ever they slight and neglect, because they think not of Eternity. They are tormented by ambition, and weakned by lust, swel'd with pride and rack'd by Envy; Passions and unsatiable desires tos them to and fro, and they are so averse to all righteousness, that they not only neglect, but even hate the just laws of God. *Christ* pronounceth them Blessed that are poor, and mourn, and suffer persecution: they contrarywise esteem them blessed that are rich, great and prosperous, and generally honoured by men. *Christ* declares that none can be his Disciple, who is not ready chearfully to forsake all that he hath for him: but these men place their affections on their wealth; keep it nigardly, part with it sorrowfully, and are ever greedy of more, ever ready to invade others right, and to get what they can from them.

3. Even ſome Profeſſors, that have choſen *Chriſt* for their portion, and pretend to be devoted to him, even ſome of theſe there be, who, unmindful of their Sacred Promiſes, indeavour nothing more than to increaſe their wealth, and oftentimes enjoy greater riches under *Chriſt* the great Exemplar of Poverty, than they could have done in a civil Calling under the greateſt Monarch of this World. Neither are ſome of theſe more careful to obey than to imitate, for inſtead of loving their Enemies, and rendring good for evil to them that hate them, as our Bleſſed Lord hath commanded us, they return hatred for ill will, and are ever ready and deſire to revenge the leaſt injuries. Who is there that obeys *Chriſt*'s counſel or injunction of turning the cheek to him that ſmites us, and ſuffering him that ſtrives for our Coat to take our Cloak alſo? or rather who is there that doth not ſlight and deride it? Let who will take an exact account of the Evangelical precepts, and of the obſervers of them, he ſhall find that they are very few that live by the Rules of the Goſpel, few that regard and eſteem it as they ſhould. Nay few there be that care to read or hear it; Fables Romances, and Idle Diſcourſes are generally prefer'd to the Word of God; whereby the vain World make it appear, that they belong not to him whoſe voice they care not

to

to hear, that *they hear not God's words, because they are not of God.*

4. 'Tis the Duty of every Christian faithfully to believe what God hath revealed, to follow his Counsels, and sincerely obey his Commands, whence it clearly follows, that he is no Christian who neglects or scorns this Duty, for Faith without Works is dead, and except our conversation be suitable to our Profession, the most glorious Names and Titles shall avail nothing. Life and manners, as well as Faith, make a difference betwixt a Heathen and a Believer; by Works the distinction is made betwixt the true Religion and the false. For what manner of Faith is theirs, who so believe in God that they despise and reject his Commands? are they not like the Devil who believes and trembles? or rather it were to be wisht that they were no worse; for his Faith begets an awe and terror, but these boast of Faith, and yet do not so much as fear God.

CHAP. III.

That original ſin is the ſpring whence all evil proceeds.

1. NOW of the cauſe of all this wickedneſs none can be ignorant, that hath but heard of the tranſgreſſion of our firſt Parents. For by their fall original Righteouſneſs being loſt, human nature utterly depraved and ſhut up under condemnation, their off-ſpring fell into evils of all ſorts ſo great and ſo many, that they can be neither expreſt nor numbred. Hence that deep and dreadful ignorance which like a black cloud darkens the mind and lies upon it; hence that brutiſh and untamable Luſt which like a heavy weight ſinks the ſoul to the ground and there keeps it faſt; hence that averſion from God, and converſion to things periſhing; hence thoſe anxious cares and fooliſh joys, thoſe diſſenſions, quarrels and enmities, thoſe perverſe Hereſies, greedy Sacrileges, and unſatiable Luſts; and hence the Eternal ruin and damnation of all Mankind. For this was the juſt vengeance of Man's impious Diſobedience and Rebellion, that God ſhould forſake him, who by Pride lift up him-

himself against God; that he that would not when he could, make a good use of his free will, should be depriv'd of it, and become uncapable of doing what was infinitely his duty and his interest to perform, except he be prevented and assisted by the divine grace and mercy.

2. Thus Man left to himself in the state of Nature, is by self-love drawn to himself, seeks himself onely, and in his wretched self alone sets his rest and his satisfaction. This is a sad truth, and 'tis much to be wisht all Christians did well consider and understand it, for if they were sensible of their weakness and impotency, how uncapable they are of themselves to do any good, then 'tis like they would daily by fervent prayer beg his gracious help, that works in us to will and to do; from whom comes all our light, our strength, and our sufficiency. But alas too many in a deep, death-like sleep, rest in carnal security, and unhappily abused by vain delusions, love their blindness and their disease too, dreaming that they are safe and sound, because they have no sense of their distemper.

CHAP. IV.

Of the occasion and drift of this Book.

1. WHileſt I often thought of theſe things, and in the bitterneſs of my Soul call'd to mind the loſt years of my life, I was griev'd and perplext both upon the account of the time which is paſt, and of that which ſhall follow hereafter. Looking backward on thoſe days which are gone, and examining ſeriouſly how I have ſpent them, I was ſeiz'd upon with horror at the ſight of my many foul prevarications againſt the laws of my gracious God, and my great unfaithfulneſs to *Chriſt* my Saviour, in the breach of thoſe ſacred vows I made when I gave up my name to him, in holy Baptiſm: I was aſham'd and confounded to have thus requited my God, and abuſed his Grace. And when I turn'd my ſelf to the future, to thoſe things that are coming upon me, I could not but dread the dreadful judgments of my offended God, and tremble exceedingly at the greatneſs of my danger, and the uncertainty of that pardon I want, and am ſo much unworthy of. In theſe ſtraights I reſolved by God's help, firſt to help my ſelf, and then others that are in the ſame caſe; to preſcribe what

might

might easily be had, and yet be effectual; things ready at hand, which being often read and considered, might be remembred and follow'd: that they that seriously design to be happy and to take the safest way that leads to Heaven, might find it here, without the trouble of a long and laborious search.

2. Now because Physicians have their *Aphorisms*, and Philosophers their *Axioms* or sentences: and in all inquiries after truth, we must begin at certain principles, which are short and comprehensive, and as it were, the seed and marrow of the whole discipline; therefore I purpose in this little book, to lay down briefly and clearly those chiefest Rules and instructions for to lead a holy and a religious life, which more at large are scattered in the sacred books of Divine Scripture, and in the works of the Holy Fathers and other good Authors. For when all is done, this is our first and our greatest concern, that one necessary thing on which all depends, to know how to live well, to live like Christians. *For what shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Mat. 16. 26. Nothing more perverse and unreasonable can be imagined, than to own our selves *Christ*'s disciples, and live quite contrary to the example

example and the precepts of *Chriſt*. *The name of a Chriſtian will avail nothing, where the life is Antichriſtian.*

CHAP. V.

The Cauſe why ſo many learn the Rules of Chriſtianity and follow them not.

1. MAny without difficulty can read and learn the Goſpel-precepts, and even often think of them: but 'tis much to be lamented that few underſtand well their force and their full importance. We eaſily grant that the only way to heaven lies through ſelf-denyal, faſting, watching and praying, keeping under the body, and going patiently through many tribulations: but when it comes to the proof of action, we ſeem to be of another mind. We can readily ſay and affirm that it is a Chriſtian's duty chearfully to endure reproaches and perſecutions, torments, and even death it ſelf: but when theſe evils are at hand, and our life comes to be in danger, then things appear not as they did before, we cannot ſee that we are oblig'd to reſignation and ſufferance; what before was a very clear caſe, is now at the beſt but very doubtful. We can be humble when no

no body reviles us: and when wee meet with no vexation then we are patient. We assent to the doctrine of *Christ*, and his severest injunctions, when we are not concern'd: but when they come to regard us, and press upon us a present duty, then the inticements of lust, and worldly vanities alter our resolutions and disturb our minds; and by a corrupt gloss or lazy interpretation we elude the unpleasing precept.

2. Truth is as it were, wrapt up in a cloud, and men hate it, because it reproves them, their sinful depraved nature cannot abide its rigour and austerity. They find in virtue something rough and bitter, and in sin a mixture of sweetness; that offends, and this gratifies their distempered palat, and they brutishly follow the bait, run into all dissolution, and so reject truth to imbrace a lie. If at any time they give ear to an honest and plain monitor who lays the truth open before them, and be so far work'd upon, as to be sensible that they are in darkness, and to have some desire after light: yet like men that would fain awake, but are oppress by a heavy slumber, and so presently fall to sleep again; they soon after close their eyes, and exclude the light, to return to their beloved darkness.

3. No wonder therefore, if we propound to do many things, and effect nothing,

thing. For we not foreſeeing the difficulties which commonly occur in well-doing, when we come to meet with them, we preſently draw back, and our courage fails; again, we truſt in our own ſtrength more than in the divine help and aſſiſtance: and when temptations grow ſtrong we loſe heart and are ſoon worſted, and learn by a ſad experience, that when we overcome, it is not by our own virtue, but by the power of God's grace. Laſtly, we give much to notion and ſpeculations, and take little care to affect our will and affections; the Chriſtian laws of well-living we learn as a ſcience, rather than as a matter of conſcience; we ſtudy Divinity, not to obedience and conformity to God's will, but to vain glory and oſtentation. *Now 'tis altogether in vain to learn wiſdom and yet live fooliſhly.*

CHAP. VI.

That the rules of Evangelical Perfection are intended for all Chriſtians.

1. MAny that have no mind to *perfect holineſs in the fear of God*, by living according to the ſtrict precepts of our Saviour *Chriſt*, pretend that they belong not to

to them, but only to Clergy-men or such as are shut up and recluse from the World; this is their excuse and their plea, but as I shall soon make it appear, it is altogether void of truth and vain. For though it is to be acknowledg'd, that some by new vows and ingagements are more particularly devoted to God, and under greater obligations to live Religiously and tend to perfection; yet certain it is that all Christians tend to the same end, though their way may differ in some circumstances: and as to what regards the practice of Christian virtues, contempt of the World, poverty in Spirit, and the loving and bearing of the Cross, they are all equally concern'd; they have the same Gospel, and are equally oblig'd to obey its dictates. Charity which is the band of perfection, comprehensive of all other duties, God requires of all Christians alike: and lust or self-love which is the root of all evil, is likewise generally forbidden; no exception of persons; no difference is made betwixt any. Our Blessed Saviour hath injon'd we should abstain from idle words, of which an account shall be rendred in the great day, that we should not be angry with our Brother, nor covet what belongs to him; he makes no distinction betwixt Clergy-men or Laymen, or persons of any rank or calling; nor yet when he says, Woe unto you that laugh

and

and bleſſed are ye that mourn: nor when he teaches that we muſt always pray, that we muſt forſake all and follow him, that we muſt hate our own life, deny our ſelves, ſuffer injuries patiently, and enter in at the ſtraight gate; in theſe conſiſts Chriſtian perfection, and yet from theſe he excludes no man.

2. Saint *Paul* likewiſe writing to all Chriſtians, ſuch as were cumbered with worldly affairs, and had the care of large families, gives them this ſtrict Aſcetick Rule, *to be content with food and raiment.* 1 Tim. 6. 8. Than which nothing more was ever required of any Hermits. Saint *Peter* alſo exhorts all believers, *to be holy in all manner of converſation, as he that hath called them is holy.* 1 Ep. 1. 15. So doth Saint *James* 1. 4. *to be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.* And our Bleſſed Saviour before them all, preaching to the multitude that followed him, *Be ye perfect,* ſaith he, *as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect,* Mat. 5. 48. Thereby recommending the higheſt degree of holineſs, to all that would be his Diſciples; that as many as are reputed children of God, by grace and adoption, might live accordingly indeavouring after the example and perfection of their Heavenly Father. And ſo hath our Bleſſed Lord laid upon all Chriſtians infinite obligations to live holy lives, to be ſtrict and virtuous to the higheſt meaſure

sure and possibility, which they may not neglect without forfeiting his favour, and excluding themselves from his Heavenly Kingdom.

CHAP. VII.

Of the usefulness of this Book, with an exhortation to follow after perfection.

1. NOW then let us despise and forsake all those things, wherein worldings place their felicity, and make it our onely study to pursue after the prize of our high calling, the height of Christian perfection, in following the blessed steps of our Blessed Redeemer. This is the aim of this little volume; to this purpose are design'd all the instructions here laid down, that we may overcome the temptations and allurements of sense, attain to the knowledge of the truth, and so return in some manner to our primitive station, that Paradise wherein we were created, to triumph over sin, and at last reign to Eternity. The children of this World would fain have it believ'd, that that perfection or sincerity which the Gospel requires, is very hard to come by, and hardly to be found in any man living, thereby endeavouring

vouring to make Christians faint and remiss, loth to venture upon an attempt, which they would have them think is wholly impossible: whereas nothing is difficult to him that is truly resolv'd and willing, and whatever is hard in it self, is made easie by that grace of God, which is always ready to assist us.

2. The truth is, there is so much of delicious beauty in virtue and righteousness, so ravishing a joy in a glimpse of heavenly light, so glorious a brightness in the sight of God's eternal truth, that the enjoyment of these for one day, may justly be prefer'd to many ages of the greatest pleasures this world can afford, *for one day in thy Courts is better than a thousand*, as the Psalmist saith, *Psal.* 84. 10.

3. Now here would I caution my Reader, not to wonder, if perchance he finds the same thing repeated more than once in this little book, for that cannot be avoided, there being so close a connexion and affinity betwixt the precepts of several virtues: and withal it may be an effect of the great power of truth, that the nearer we view it, the oftner we are drawn to review it. Likewise if something herein seems too Angelical and high, or more harsh and difficult than the frail nature of man can well bear, let him remember that the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and that the sufferings of

of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. *Our labour is but short, but our promised reward is infinite and eternal.*

CHAP. VIII.

Of the folly of them that neglect their last end, and how necessary it is to consider it seriously.

1. IT is not to be thought nor expreſt how ignorant and careleſs many Chriſtians remain about their great and laſt end; if there were no Eternity, and if nothing after this life were to be fear'd or hoped for, they could not live more looſely than they do. Few they are that ſeriouſly conſider that their great intereſt and their chiefeſt buſineſs which ſhould take place of all other, is to attain their proper end; that end which is deſired for it ſelf, and beyond which we ſhall wiſh for nothing, of which S. *Philip* ſaith, *Joh.* 14. 8. *Lord ſhew us the Father and it ſufficeth us*: For this end, which is God, the beatifical viſion of him, will be al-ſufficient, becauſe that it will have no end; all other things Ps 17. 15

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are meer trifles, vanities and vexation of ſpirit.

2. The very ſhape of our bodies doth admoniſh us of the end for which we were born; for God made us with our face upwards, that looking up to heaven, we might know that thence is our origine, and that there is our reſt and countrey. And yet for all this, many like brutes look down and grovel upon the ground, and can reliſh nothing, nor deſire nothing, but what is earthly; nay more, like men in a deep lethargy, they can hardly be waked by the loudeſt clamours and the fear of a rageing approaching fire; and what is worſt of all, if they ſomewhat lift up their head, and ſpeak imperfectly two or three words of ſenſe, they ſoon fall again into their ſlumber, and no longer will hear, or mind what concerns their life and ſafety.

3. It is the counſel of our Bleſſed Saviour, Mat. 6. 33. *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs, and all other things ſhall be added unto you:* but we ſlighting and neglecting that bleſſed Kingdom, ſeek for mony, pleaſures, and preferments, and mind nothing elſe. *Chriſt* tells us, that *one thing is neceſſary*, Luke 10. 42. but we cumber our ſelves about many things, which for the moſt part are only hindrances to our ſalvation. He commands us, Mat. 7. 12. *To do that to others, which we would they ſhould*

should do unto us: But we generally do those things to them, which we would think most grievous to suffer our selves. He forbids *us to judge*, Mat. 7. 1. But we love to censure others, and to condemn them very severely; we take notice of motes in their eyes, and perceive not beams in our own: and to sum up all in this, he requires we would love him above all things, *with all our heart and soul*, Mat. 22. 37. But we dote on pelf and riches; we are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; to him we prefer any thing that gratifies our lusts and our sinful affections. Thus, in as much as in us lies, we make the preaching of the Cross to be of none effect, the Incarnation of the Son of God to be to no purpose, and sacraments to be vain and insignificant: because we will live as if we had no knowledge of God, no thoughts of heaven nor hell, no remembrance of our latter end. The life of every creature consisteth in acting sutable to its own nature; now that which we are to do, as men, wherein properly consists our duty and our dignity, is to know God, and to love him: therefore to be imployed in this, is our proper work, our life and happiness; to do any thing else, is vain and useless; and to do any thing contrary, is infinitely pernicious.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The reasons why all men are not happy, being they all desire it.

1. IT is the constant sense and design of all men that can use their reason, to aspire after happiness; but what that is, there are and have been many opinions and disputes; and Philosophers have spent much time and industry to find out the way to Blessedness, the desire whereof is natural, and common to all, of what parts or persuasions soever. Yet Christians alone know it, they being taught by the doctrine of Faith, that God is the fountain of all felicity, the fulfilling of all rational desires, that *Summum Bonum* or last end, which is to be prefer'd and lov'd, and sought before all other things, as that wherein alone we can find perfect rest and satisfaction. Notwithstanding 'tis to be confest and sadly bewailed that multitudes of Christians are so wilfully blind and perverse, that though they passionately wish for happiness, yet they do nothing whereby to obtain it. They are so grosly cheated by a false appearance of Bliss, the deceit and illusions of things present, that they aspire to nothing above sense, and therefore they would, and yet cannot be

be happy, becauſe they aim not at the right end; their actions and purſuits have a tendency to miſery, and thither neceſſarily lead them, though it be much againſt their will.

2. As in a circle, though never ſo ample, there is but one center, which being alone in the middle, ſeems to have dominion over all the lines that can be drawn from the circumference, and to be their proper place of reſt: thus is God the one onely center and reſt of our ſouls, and if they turn from him, they may wander eternally, other objects being finite and altogether unſatisfying. Therefore God requires only that we ſhould ſeek after him, becauſe that alone is abſolutely required to our well-being. Whatever elſe is wanting, we may be well without it; life it ſelf is not neceſſary: and if not life, much leſs leſſer enjoyments. And ſo he that lives as he ſhould, aiming at his right end, muſt live to God alone, to ſerve and to glorifie him. For this is the nature of man, and a law appointed to him which cannot be changed, that he that deſires and purſues after that ſupreme, eternal, uncreated good, thereby becomes happy: whereas he that any ways turns from it, becomes neceſſarily miſerable.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That with an upright intention we must use all things, and refer all our actions to God.

1. IN that we are pilgrims and travellers going to our countrey, it is altogether necessary we should always advance thitherward, and seriously inquire whether we follow the right way, whither we are going, what end we propound to our selves in all our labours, and what it is we now aim at by our present studies and endeavours: for man undertakes nothing, but to a certain end and purpose, which the better it is, the better also is the undertaking; it is a good intention that makes a good work, and that good intention is that, which is directed by the rule of faith. It is the voice of the wicked, Wisd. 2. 6. *Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present.* Whereas the best of creatures are only for use; and God alone for enjoyment. The Creatures are as so many steps, or rounds of a ladder whereby we might ascend up to God; thus at least he intended it: but by our depravation and folly, they became

became obstacles in our way to him, they turn us from the path to life and happiness, and as the Wiseman saith, Wisd. 14.11. *The creatures of God become stumbling blocks to the souls of men, and a snare to the feet of the unwise.* Of the unwise, he saith, such as will not take God for their guide, such as turn their eyes from his glorious light, to enjoy the shade and obscurity of creatures: thereby falling in love with darkness, and so becoming uncapable of ever abiding the divine saving light.

2. Now if all creatures are created for this, to be as helps and means whereby we may obtain our end, then are we to take off our affections from them, to place them upon the Creator, who is the end we should aim at. For the end should be lov'd and desir'd without end, and without competitor, in goodness being independent, supreme, and alone satisfactory: whereas means have no farther goodness, than as they help to obtain the end. A Christian should therefore refer to God all his thoughts, and words, and actions, and that, not lazily or verbally only: but with a strong affection, and with a pure heart: avoiding thereby the cheat men often put upon themselves, in being deceiv'd with their own formalities and specious pretences, when even in Religion and spiritual exercises, they often seek and please themselves

ſelves, rather than God. Upon this account the Scripture calls the way to life, ſtraight and narrow, becauſe depraved man refers all to himſelf, and can hardly follow the pure and direct ways which God preſcribes, being naturally averſe to an upright intention. But when this averſion is once overcome, by an aſſiduous diligence and delight in the law of God, then divine commandments are not grievous, the way to life is wide, and the yoke of *Chriſt* is light and pleaſant.

CHAP. XI.

That men trifling about things Eternal and being earneſt about the World, is the cauſe why ſo many attain not their main end.

1. THat the number of fools is paſt number, was rightly affirmed by the Wiſe man: For indeed infinite multitudes of men trifle away their days ſo ſimply, act ſo childiſhly, or rather ſo much like mad men, that their intolerable follies cannot be ſufficiently deplor'd. They ſet the fleſh above the ſpirit; they prefer time to Eternity, and Earth to Heaven, till the

the unhappy Comedy of their ſinful life ends in a ſadder Tragedy of death, and they go down to Hell in a moment. If a ſuit at law is to be determin'd, or an eſtate gain'd, or a place of honour obtain'd, then they ſpare no coſt nor labour, no ſearch, no diligence, no ſtudy: but if Heaven is to be purchaſt, and eternal life and glory made ſure, then no man ſtirs; they are all aſleep and unactive; no regard, no care is had of it.

2. In things that touch and afflict the body, as hunger and thirſt, heat and cold, pains and infirmities, our ſenſes are quick, and can never be deceiv'd: and therefore with all our might and induſtry, we preſently occur to thoſe evils, and endeavour to remove them. But if our ſoul ſuffers under the ſame or the like ſpiritual evils, we are not ſenſible, and we care no more, than if that nobler part of us whereby we live, and are rational and like to Angels, had no being at all. And this, becauſe the fleſh hath got the upper hand: and we value this ſport, uncertain life, more than life eternal: and we make it our firſt and ſole employment to reſcue that carcaſs from death, for a few moments, which certainly muſt ſoon become its prey.

3. One cauſe of theſe prepoſterous doings, is the groſs and brutiſh ignorance, or rather inconſideration of too too many,

who will neither know nor conſider, to what end man was created, what it is he ſhould ſeek and deſign in the whole courſe of his life, and what way he ſhould take that he may not miſs of his great aim, Jer. 12. 11. *The whole land is made deſolate becauſe no man lays it to heart*, i. e. becauſe no man conſiders wiſely. Another cauſe of this miſchief, is the great number and power of thoſe Enemies that perpetually aſſault us, whoſe ſnares no man can poſſibly avoid, without God breaks them, and delivers him: for we are continually beſieg'd by a frail fleſh, a flattering world, and legions of devils, *who ſeek to devour us.*

4. Laſtly, our folly and miſery proceeds partly from our blindneſs; the whole World being in darkneſs, we want light to guide us, and yet will not beg it of God, and pray him devoutly, he would lead us aright, who alone is able and willing to do it: and partly from our ſloth and inconſtancy; for we are vertuous in wiſh and not in effect, becauſe we are lazy to work, and when it comes to the practice, we find difficulties, and being ſoon tir'd and diſheartned, haſtily give over, before we have effected any thing. All Chriſtians no doubt would be glad to come at laſt to *Chriſt*, but they have no heart to come after him: they would be glad to enjoy him, but care not to imitate him: fain would they come to him, but

but not follow him. *Men would obtain riches without labour, and Crowns without fighting; they like well of rewards, but they would take no pains.*

CHAP. XII.

How men ſuffer themſelves to be deceiv'd by a fair out-ſide, and falſe appearance of good.

1. THis World's felicity put all together, with all thoſe things that are moſt eſteem'd by the generality of mankind, the whole is but like a coarſe picture which ſeems to have ſomething pleaſing and inviting, when you look upon't with a falſe light, or in a place ſomewhat obſcure, or with a ſmall blind candle, ſuch as is the dim and deceitful light of preſent time: but if you bring forth the picture, and view it before that glorious ſun that ſhines for ever, the radiant brightneſs of Eternity, there it will appear deform and unfiniſh'd, a dark and imperfect ſhadow which repreſents nothing, a confuſed heap of ſtrokes and lines drawn without order or deſign. For though the light of the Goſpel enlightens the World, yet it remains in darkneſs;

men will not see the glorious discoveries which the Gospel makes; *The light shined in the darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not.*

3. Yet that light it is, and none else, that clearly shews the great difference betwixt good and evil, betwixt vile and precious, betwixt truth and appearances; how we may know and chuse the one from the other. By this blessed light of Christianity which dwells in the heart and instructs it, and abides for ever, by it we are taught not to cleave to the creatures because of their attractive beauty: but so to consider their perfections, as to be by them led to the fountain whence they proceed, to the love and admiration of the glorious maker of all things. And the same divine light it is, makes me see that it is good for me to hold me fast by my God, and to put in him alone my whole confidence, and not in Princes or Friends, or even Brothers: who as they have all a distinct being, have also different ends, and seek from us every one his own advantage, being ever ready to forsake us, as soon as they shall think we are become useless to them. This light therefore we ought gladly to receive and follow, that appearances and pleasing illusions put not a cheat upon us, and make us seek for happiness in the creatures which are as if they were not, and have no value, but what the ignorant vulgar attributes

butes to them: and make us forsake God, who remains for ever, who is the fountain of all being, and the author of all good things, out of whom there is no rest, no peace, no felicity to be had. *He that departs from the supreme happiness, thereby becomes miserable in the highest degree.*

CHAP. XIII.

How men spend themselves and their time, and abuse all things to their own ruine.

1. THE Life of man runs round and spends it self within this circle, they eat and drink, they sleep and wake, that they may return to the same again; they scrape together as much as they are able, and there is no end of their acquists; they will live as merrily as they can, and die as late as possible may be; betwixt their baptism and the hour of death there lies a confused heap of acts of sin and acts of Religion, of penitent confessions and wilful relapses, of Sacramental vows and breaches of them. No day passeth over without they add to the number of their transgressions; and they all go on heedlessly

without considering what will be the end of their course of life; and they all run, when but a few care, how they come to the end of their race: because they consider not what reward and glory is prepared in Heaven, to them that remain faithful to their Christian engagements, overcoming the world and the flesh, for to follow *Christ*.

2. God created the whole universe, and in it man to his image, giving him an understanding to know his maker, a will to love and obey him, a memory to think of his laws, faculties to serve him, and a tongue to praise him: but then as he made man for himself, so he created the whole world for man, that he might use all things for his own happiness, and for the glory of God, the giver of all. But ungrateful man, unmindful of his duty, drawn by the deceit of voluptuousness, minds only his sensual pleasure, useth or rather abuseth his knowledge and reason, his riches and honours, his health and life and all other enjoyments, to the displeasure and dishonour of God his gracious benefactor, who freely granted him all those things, that if he would make a good use of them, they might be instruments of his present ease and well being, and of his future eternal happiness. *So great is the folly and perverseness of man, that he abuseth that to his own ruine, which God intended, and gave him for his greater good.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

That the right way to Heaven is, every one to remain in the station Providence hath appointed him, and therein bear the crosses which he meets withal.

1. EVery man that aims at the right end, must guide his course thither by the measures of Eternity, and that in a way sutable to the circumstances of his condition. This necessary Rule is not observ'd by all, for many following their own fancies, unadvisedly forsake that way wherein Divine providence had brought them, and take some other of their own chusing. Like *Naaman* the *Syrian* who, though he much longed to be cur'd of his leprosie, yet refused to use the easie remedy prescrib'd by the Prophet, and preferring what he himself had fancied, had gone away in anger diseased as he came, had not his wiser servant hindred it. After this manner, many following their own heads, undertake many things which they cannot perform, but which only vex and distract them: being above their abilities, or inconsistent with the necessary occupations which they lie under;

ſo that they can neither act, nor advance towards the deſired end, but ſpend themſelves in unprofitably wiſhing that things were otherwiſe than they are.

2. But the ſhort and ready way to Bliſs, is that which our Bleſſed Saviour hath ſhew'd us, ſaying, *Let him that will come after me, take up his Croſs and follow me.* His Croſs, he ſaith, not that which was to be another man's burthen; the Croſs which God lays upon him, and hath fitted for him, and given him ſtrength to bear: not that which he fooliſhly ſhall take up, and ſoon after poorly ſink under. Theſe two things muſt therefore carefully be heeded, firſt that a man underſtand perfectly what is the right end at which he ſhould aim; without this, all deliberations concerning the means, are to no purpoſe: and ſecondly that knowing that good end, he keeps his mind intent upon't, and take that plain path towards it, which lies before him, and agrees with his ſtate and condition, therein bearing his Croſs chearfully, as the Lord hath commanded. Now this is every man's Croſs, to diſcharge well the duties of his place and of his ſeveral relations, to bear patiently thoſe afflictions which he daily meets in his way, and conſtantly, by doing better and better that which belongs to his province, to endeavour after the higheſt perfection attainable therein. Every man

in

in his proper ſtation, *in that calling wherein he is called, may beſt become a good Chriſtian, perfect holineſs in the fear of God, and at laſt obtain happineſs.*

CHAP. XV.

How man's laſt end or ſupreme happineſs is qualified, and how ſo many miſtake and miſs it.

1. THeſe be the inſeparable properties of the laſt and higheſt end at which man ſhould aim, that it be perfectly good, and perfectly ſatisfactory, ſo that being once obtain'd, nothing elſe is wanted, and nothing elſe deſir'd; for whoever wants any thing, deſires it alſo, and he that deſires is not ſatisfied, is not yet come to that laſt end beyond which his wiſhes can go no further; that is, is not poſſeſt of God, who alone is infinitely good, and can alone repleniſh all our deſires and capacities. I ſhall be ſatisfied when thy glory appears, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, or *I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.* Pſal. 17. 15. that and nothing elſe can perfectly do it.

2. Yet ſuch is the perverſe and incurable folly of man, that he will have that to be beſt

beſt which he loves beſt; though by the teſtimony of others, and the conviction of his own conſcience he knows it to be evil. And therefore many, either ignorantly or perverſly purſue after that which is good only in appearance, and forſake that which is good indeed. And they thereby become diſorderly, wretched and criminal; enemies to God, lovers of the thorny pleaſures of ſin; and lovers of that fatal darkneſs which hides their ſorrows, the ſnares among which they walk, and covers their miſery and danger, ſo that they neither ſee nor fear the dreadful tribunal of that juſt Judge, who will condemn all Apoſtates, that turn from the right way. *They walk*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *in the vanity of their mind, having the underſtanding darkned, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart: being paſt feeling, they have given themſelves over to laſciviouſneſs, to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, Epheſ. 4. 17. *They count their life a market for gain, and ſay, we muſt be getting every way, though it be by evil means*, Wiſd: 15. 12. And then it often happens by a juſt judgment, that their faith comes to be as debaucht as their life; that having long ſaid it by their wicked deeds, they at laſt ſay it in their heart, *that there is no God.*

3. I have already, and cannot too often note the cause of this evil; that is *Adam*, who by his sin, not only lost the uprightness of his will, but also the true light of his understanding: so that in him, who was the stock and root whence all men grow, we were depriv'd of both. And now this corruption of the will, inclines man to self-love, vain glory, and an imperious pride; to covetousness, sloth, sensuality and looseness: And in the darkness of the understanding expoſeth him to ignorance, and false apprehension of things, to doubts, errors and lies, and makes him have an aversion to good and serious thoughts. Thus man is become earthly, weak, and distemperd, unable to resist the sinful motions of his own heart, and unable to know or to attain true felicity: but rather, as it is written, *His ways are always grievous, and God's judgments are far above out of his sight*, Psal. 10. 5. And he now being alienated from God, to whom all things should be refer'd, is also a stranger to virtue, which consists in the intention, in being design'd to please God, rather than in the act. But that Soul which by the Grace of our Blessed *Jesus*, is redeem'd from this power of Satan and slavery to sin, is also enabled to cleave stedfastly to God, in whom it enjoys Peace and joy, and full satisfaction, all that can make him intirely happy; *for he is unreasonable*

reaſonable and too unſatiable, to whom God is not ſufficient.

CHAP. XVI.

Another reaſon why ſo many miſs of their end; their living too much by ſenſe.

1. WHereas reaſon it ſelf teaches, and all men freely confeſs that things to come ſhould be prefer'd to things preſent, heavenly things to things earthly, and things eternal to things that laſt but for a ſhort time: 'tis hard to conceive why ſo many who believe and acknowledge this, yet by their actions ſtrongly deny it. In worldly matters, and ſuch as concern this preſent life, they are very active, very wiſe and very laborious; in others they ſeem to have neither ſenſe nor reaſon. If you ſpeak to them of God, of Holy-Living and Life Eternal, they underſtand you not, or they preſently forget what you ſaid. Things material and periſhing are ſenſible, and therefore more regarded and ſet by; though oftentimes experience will force them to know that all human concerns are flitting, uncertain, and very deceitful, yet men follow ſenſe, and they ſoon return to embrace thoſe things which cuſtom and a familiar converſe hath made dear to them.

2. The

2. The fall (as I ſaid) of our firſt Parents, is the head-ſpring whence all this miſchief flows; from it proceed all temptations, as alſo the darkneſs and inconſtancy of our minds: but the more immediate cauſe of it, which I now conſider is the imbecillity, depravation and weakneſs of the faculties of our ſouls, which have no right apprehenſion of the things of God, and but an imperfect confuſed notion of the amazing concerns of Eternity. The lovelineſs of virtue and the great deformity of ſin, the terrors of death and the dread of God's righteous judgments, the joys of Saints above, and the grievous torments of the wicked in hell: theſe are but words which we hear, we have dark and narrow conceptions of them, we underſtand not of how great an importance they are, and therefore we are not ſo affected with them, as to be made wiſe unto ſalvation. Of things offer'd to our conſideration, we only mind that leaſt outward part which falls under the reach of ſenſe: but we attend not to that which is leſs ſenſible, though more conſiderable and apt effectually to work upon the mind. Thus in ſin, we look moſt of all to what's temporal; we are more concern'd for the impairing of our fame and the diminution of our worth or ſelf-complacency, than for having offended God, and made our ſelves obnoxious to an infinite

infinite pain. Likewiſe in a dying man we moſt obſerve what is in view, outward ſymptomes and accidents, little regarding the more eſſential adjuncts which concern the ſoul, and are of far greater moment. And we conceive of the laſt judgment and the unquenchable flames of Hell, which are imperceptible to ſenſe, as of things which are nothing to us, and which we have no intereſt to mind.

3. The ſame deception alſo extends it ſelf to things preſent which gratifie our appetite; we take notice only of that outſide which pleaſeth us, and ſo deplorable is our ſottiſh miſtake, that we count our ſelves very happy to enjoy that for a moment, which muſt make us eternally miſerable. Every man knows his Soul is immortal, and many Philoſophers have writ great things upon that ſubject: but where are they that are ſolicitous for its well-being after death? Do not moſt men neglect their ſoul, and live as if it were to die with the body? The miſchief is, that generally men live neither by faith nor by reaſon, they follow blindfold and brutiſhly juſt as ſenſe leads them: *avoiding carefully what is now troubleſom to the fleſh, as if nothing elſe were to be done here, and nothing elſe fear'd hereafter.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

That we being the Children of God, ought to be guided by his Spirit and by the example of Christ.

1. IF a man should rightly understand and seriously consider, that God by a gracious adoption owns him for his son, that he is redeem'd by the Bloud of *Christ*, and born again by Holy Baptism into the hope of Eternal Life, he would doubtless esteem it his noblest title and his greatest honour, he would despise all earthly advantages, and mind and value nothing but what is Divine and Eternal, and passionately desiring to come to his Father, he would do nothing unworthy of him. As he that acts the King on the stage, though it be but a vain shew to delight vainer people, yet is careful to do and to speak nothing but what befits a King: so, and much more careful should a Christian be to do nothing unworthy of that honourable name, which makes him a brother and disciple of *Jesus*, and an heir of his Heavenly Kingdom. And as a picture-drawer when he is upon a great design, fixes his eyes and mind on that Original which

which he means to copy: So ſhould a follower of *Chriſt* in all his words and actions ſet before himſelf his Maſter's Life, as the moſt perfect exemplar he is reſolv'd to imitate, and never to ſwerve from.

2. Now he that profeſſeth *Chriſt* and remains in him, ſhould walk as he walked, carefully obſerve and follow the ſteps of his new and better Lord. For as whileſt we remain in the ſtate of Nature and follow its inſtinct, we are Children of wrath, and are ſlaves to Satan and to our own luſts: ſo now we are redeem'd from that unhappy ſlavery by the bloud of *Chriſt*, his Grace muſt be the principle of all our actions, we muſt carefully follow him whoſe members we are. 1 Cor. 15. 47. *The firſt man is of the Earth, earthly; the ſecond man is the Lord from Heaven: therefore as we have born the Image of the Earthy, we ſhould alſo bear the Image of the Heavenly*; making that our firſt and chiefeſt care, that we walk worthy of our high calling, as being led by his Spirit from whom we have our higheſt title, *for if any man have not the Spirit of* Chriſt, *he is none of his*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 9.

3. Now he alone hath the Spirit of *Chriſt* whoſe outward and inward life; that is, whoſe actions and affections are according to the Pattern of *Chriſt*'s bleſſed example, who endeavours always to ſpeak and act, as *Chriſt* his Maſter did. According as we are exhorted

exhorted not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit, being created anew in *Jesus Christ* unto good works. *We should look unto the Rock whence we are hewn*, not living after the methods of depraved man, but walking in the ways of that righteous God, from whom we have our being: that we being holy in all manner of conversation, may be own'd to be the children of our Father which is in Heaven. *For he certainly is no child of God, who is not led and sanctified by the Spirit of* Christ.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Just liveth by faith, not by the laws of flesh and blood.

1. FAith is to all virtues and to a Christian life, the same thing as the root is to the tree, the foundation to the building, and the Spring to the fountain: for it is the first lesson of Christianity from whence we learn all the rest, there we must first begin, *and without it it is impossible to please God, for the just lives by faith.* The Commendation *Job* gives to wisdom, Chap. 28. is justly due to Faith, Faith being the principle of it: and likewise it is evident and granted

granted by all wiſe men, that *Solomon*'s high Encomium of Wiſdom doth but ſet forth the Divine excellencies of Faith; Wiſd. 7. *Gold in reſpect of her is as little ſand, and ſilver ſhall be counted as clay before her, ſhe is a treaſure unto men, that never faileth, which they that uſe, become the friends of God. She is the brightneſs of the everlaſting light, the unſpotted mirrour of the power of God, and the Image of his goodneſs.* The doctrine of Faith apprehended by Faith teacheth us all Truth, informs our Souls what we ought to love, what to ſhun and what to purſue. It teacheth us that what the world counts good, is evil: And that worldly calamities are good, if indur'd patiently. It teacheth us to deſpiſe things viſible and temporal, and all that which is for no uſe but to the material part of us. It teacheth us to know God and to know our ſelves, which is the true ſaving knowledge, and the higheſt of our wiſdome. And it frees us from the pernicious errors of this fooliſh world, and from its wretched ſlavery, to make us wiſe unto ſalvation, and ſet us at perfect liberty.

2. There is a vaſt diſtance and great contrariety betwixt the inſtructions of faith and the cuſtoms of this preſent world; but then, *Chriſt* who delivers the firſt, being ever true and infallible, it is clearly our duty and intereſt to live by faith and not by ſenſe,

ſenſe, to follow the holy light of our holy faith, not the wicked example of this wicked world. And withal 'tis much to be obſerv'd, that depraved as we now are, there is nothing in us, nothing in our nature but what is contrary to the principles of the Chriſtian Faith, and altogether deſtructive of them. For 'tis the conſtant dictate and endeavour of fleſh and bloud and natural reaſon, to procure by all means poſſible, a well-being to our ſelves in this preſent world, without taking any further care of a better life, and a bleſſed Eternity. This evil men have from *Adam*, and from thoſe luſts which reign in their mortal bodies, and the beſt of men have ſtill ſome cauſe to groan under the ſenſe of it. Rom. 7. *The good that I would, I do not, and the evil which I hate that I do; O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* St. *Paul* anſwers, the Grace of God through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* will deliver us: For by Grace we are ſav'd from our blindneſs and impotency, and enabled to ſee and chuſe that which is good, and to perform the ſame: and the firſt and chiefeſt work of that grace is faith, whereby we are united to *Chriſt*, and receive a new life from him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

That Faith works in a Christian self-denyal and contempt of the World.

1. GReat is the power and ſtrength of Faith, for it makes the faithful Chriſtian to be as it ſelf is, unſhaken and unmovable. The true believer whoſe faith is lively and active, regards and ſeeks nothing but God, and in him alone finds light and peace, delight and full ſatisfaction: but in the world and in the ſons of men, he finds neither reſt nor pleaſure; for in time of need there is no help in them. They are like all other things under the Sun periſhing and unſtable, ſo that he that relies on them muſt expect the ſame deſtiny: whereas he that truſts on God who is unmoveable, is eſtabliſhed for ever. As the Saints that ſee God as he is, become like unto him: ſo ſhould our life expreſs the holineſs of our belief, our actions ſhould be a lively repreſentation of what we ſee by faith: and we ſhould glory in nothing but in the Croſs of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, which to the lovers of this preſent world, is a reproach and an offence.

2. The

2. The firſt man indeed in the ſtate of his innocence might have come to Bliſs by a free and lawful uſe of thoſe good creatures which God had prepar'd for him, in the delights of Paradiſe: but after he had rebel'd againſt God and infected his unborn poſterity with ſin, the Divine Wiſdom appointed another way to Bliſs; that is, the way of the Croſs and Self-denyal, through which *Chriſt* himſelf paſt, and appointed the ſame to all his followers, ſaying, Luke 9. 23. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſs daily and follow me.* And again, Luke 14. 26, 33. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my diſciple. And whoſoever he be of you that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple.*

3. This is the ground-work and the true inſtitution of a Chriſtian life, and this is that excellent knowledge of *Chriſt*, which is difficult and unpleaſant to natural men, and contrary to the Spirit of the World. This is the higheſt Philoſophy, which exceeds the capacity and knowledge of the wiſe men of this world; and this is the higheſt perfection, and the certain way to Bliſs, to know and to follow *Jeſus Chriſt* and him crucified; to hate ones ſelf and the world, with all its pleaſures and vanities, and to love poverty, contempt, ſorrows and tribulations. But

to

to understand well this plain lesson, or first principle, requires a great measure of Grace; and more yet to relish it with pleasure; most of all, to practise it, to live accordingly in the whole course of our conversation.

CHAP. XX.

Of the desperate folly of men, who willingly run to ruin, by their inconsideration.

1. ETernal torments being prepar'd for none but such as will be miserable, and by their free and wilful wickedness, chuse Hell for their portion; on the other side, Eternal joys above being offer'd to all that will partake of them: who would not think the Prisons of darkness and sorrow should be wholly empty, and Heaven infinitely full and throng'd? Who could imagine any man should be so desperately mad, as to chuse eternal misery, when he could easily be happy for ever? Yet so it is, few there are that enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and many there are that go down to Hell; insomuch that the first, compared to these, are but a small number, whom our Blessed Saviour calls *the little flock.* The folly of men is so strange and amazing, that the

the greater part of them prefer Eternal woe to Bliss Eternal, though you shall not find one how thirsty soever, that would sip of that cup, he should suspect to be poison'd, yet many every where may be found, who greedily commit those sins, which, not doubts or opinions, but a certain faith assures them, must be punisht with ever-burning flames.

2. This unheard of madness, many attribute to want of Faith, which though it may be true of some amongst us, yet daily experience and observation puts it beyond all doubt, that the greater part of them that perish, perish for want of consideration. For though they believe that there is a Hell, and that therein none shall suffer but such as will enjoy the pleasures of sin while they live, yet they soon forget this important truth; their fancy and their affections are fixt to this earth, they only please their appetites, and live so sensually, that their reason can hardly look beyond the present; the notions of Eternity are kept out, and their understanding made uncapable and unwilling to consider wisely, that their short joys and delights will soon end into bitterness and endless sorrows, and that it is very easie for us whilest we live, to avoid that dreadful misery, and obtain Eternal happiness. And would to God, men would seriously mind and observe this; O

that they were wiſe, that they would underſtand and conſider their latter end, and live accordingly. It is man's property and his privilege, to think and meditate, and ſure his thoughts and meditations ſhould of themſelves run, firſt of all, to his chief end, to that which is his own greateſt intereſt. No error or ignorance is ſo pernicious, as to neglect ones own Salvation.

CHAP. XXI.

The Character of a true Chriſtian.

1. HE is a Chriſtian indeed that owns the Faith of *Chriſt*, and obeys his precepts, and follows his Bleſſed Example; for to this we are oblig'd by our Chriſtian Profeſſion, to raiſe our ſelves above theſe earthly things, to live a Divine and Heavenly Life. Becauſe that *the Grace of God which bringeth Salvation hath appeared unto all men* (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Tit.* 2. 11.) *teaching us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live in this preſent world Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly: looking for that Bleſſed Hope and the glorious appearing of*

of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar People zealous of good Works.* Therefore, as he cannot justly be called Doctor, who is not so much as a Scholar; as he deserves not the name of Captain, who understands not Souldiery; and as he is not an Artist, that hath not the skill of it: *No more can he with truth be called a Christian, who is not a true follower of* Christ.

2. They therefore only are truly Christians, who having renounc'd the vanities and sinful desires of this World, love God with all their heart, and with all their strength, and their neighbour altogether in God and for God, preferring not themselves to any others, because that in our second and better birth we are all made equal: They that strictly observe the rules of justice and sobriety; in all things behaving themselves so innocently as not to give a just cause of offence to any Person: they that use the creatures for necessity, as sick men do Physick, coveting nothing but that only which cannot be taken away from them: they that seek not to please, and fear not to displease any, but God alone: they that hate their own flesh, in that it is the body of sin, and therefore daily chastize and keep it under, lest it grow petulant and masterless: they that are ever con-

ſtant to their reſolutions, and being above the World cannot be terrified by any threats or perſecutions: they that in proſperity and adverſity are always the ſame, peaceable and even, able clearly to ſee and to follow truth: they that longing after things Eternal, deſpiſe things preſent, and living upon Faith, Hope and Charity, believe therefore what they ſee not, hope what they have not, and love that which as yet they do not poſſeſs: they that ſo love God, that for his ſake they refuſe no labour, and are always ready to expoſe themſelves to any dangers, without any other deſign but only to advance his glory: they that from the teſtimony of a good conſcience, and their confidence in Gods mercy, chearfully expect *Chriſt*'s coming in his Heavenly Kingdom, and can joyfully ſay with the Apoſtle, 2 Tim. 4. 7. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith, henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day*: They alone have a right to the Title and the Bleſſedneſs of Chriſtians, that do all theſe with ſincerity.

3. Such men as theſe rejoyce when they are counted worthy to ſuffer for the name of *Jeſus*, and they count that day loſt, in which they have not done and endured ſomething upon his account. They make their

their Glory, their Felicity, their Wiſdom, to conſiſt in ſuch things as the World accounts Shame, Miſery and Folly. They deteſt the falſe Principles on which proceeds carnal prudence, as that we muſt be Rich and Great, honour'd by the World, and above others: and they love and heartily imbrace the Chriſtian verity which teacheth us to deſpiſe riches, to deny our ſelves, and to glory in nothing, ſave in the Croſs of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. In a word, their converſation is in Heaven, and they ſo live that all their actions ſeem to ſpeak aloud, *That their Kingdom is not of this World.* Theſe things indeed are high and difficult, but *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers violence, and is only to be taken by force: and withall it well deſerves all our labours, and nobleſt contentions.*

CHAP. XXII.

Several uſeful cautions how a Chriſtian ſhould undertake and perfect his works.

1. ALL the actions of a Chriſtian ſhould be done in peace and meekneſs, and he ought to conſider the circumſtances of time and place and perſons, and

eſpecially of the end of that he is about: but withall let him take care of being raſh and haſty, of following ſudden motions of nature rather than reaſon, Grace and Religion. Let not his mind be light and inconſtant, eaſily wandring after vain projects: but let him attend and be ready to entertain and to obey the illuminations and motions of the good Spirit: When he is about to begin any work, let not his mind be too buſie and diſtracted with other thoughts, for then he muſt expect to want his wits and fail in many things, which afterwards will grieve him, when it will be too late. When he firſt enters upon any deſign, let him humbly beg that God would guide and aſſiſt him, and let him ſeriouſly conſider what ſhare God hath in the buſineſs, and how much of it is on his own account. In the carrying on of his work let not ſelf-complacency turn him from the good end he propoſed: and in the finiſhing thereof let him be cautious that all he hath done be not marr'd and ſpoil'd by ſelf-applauſe and vain-glory: above all, let him be ſeriouſly intent upon this, that he ſeeks not the praiſe of men, but the glory of God, keeping down proud thoughts, in the conſideration of his being nothing.

2. He ſhould not meddle with any buſineſs, except God by his Providence calls him

him to it; and then he ought to go through with it chearfully and diligently; and with noble designs of charity to men, specially to their souls: considering that the bliss or perfection of this present life, consisteth not in the full enjoyment of God, but in the conformity of our will to his, in the doing and suffering his pleasure. Except necessity compell him, let him not undertake any thing that's above his strength, that if it be possible he may lose nothing of his peace nor of the freedom of his mind: for to be too intent, and too much taken up with things without us, commonly quencheth the Spirit of God, and deprives our Souls of tranquillity. Rather as the Angel which is said to have accompanied *Tobit*, though it was always ready to serve him, yet nevertheless attended to the will of God, and was always present to him: so should a good Christian mind the necessary concerns of this life, and be outwardly troubled and imployed about them; when yet his heart should be with God, and his soul in Heaven, there to be free from the distractions and all the affections of the World.

CHAP. XXIII.

That to diſcharge the duties of our ſtation is the beſt thing we can do.

1. TO do that which our place and calling requires of us here, and that which will make us happy hereafter, may be ſaid to be one and the ſame thing; for no man more certainly works out his Salvation, than he that honeſtly, and diligently works in his proper ſphere. Therefore the Devil commonly lays this ſnare in our way to Chriſtian perfection, to make us aſpire after the doing of great matters which are no parts of our office, thereby to buſie and diſtract our mind, that we may not attend to our proper duty, which lies before us, and the doing whereof is our greateſt virtue.

2. He therefore greatly deceives himſelf, that would fain change his condition, imagining he could better ſerve God if he were here or there, or ſo or ſo, after Providence or a prudent choiſe have otherwiſe determin'd it. It doth but make him lazy and negligent in doing what he ſhould, whileſt

whileſt he thinks of what belongs not to him; it makes him to ſit idle, and do nothing in the place where he is, whileſt he projects to do great feats where he is not. Whereas the unblameable integrity or perfection at which a Chriſtian ſhould aim, depends upon particular actions, they that are negligent and incurious to do them well, ſet themſelves backward and make no progreſs; for their heart being abſent, and their thoughts employ'd ſomewhere elſe, they do but little where they are, and yet that little is done after a dreaming careleſs way. Such men are always beginning, or about to begin to live well; they contrive many things, but bring nothing to perfection; they are all leaves and no fruit. *Like Trees that are often remov'd, they no where take firm root, and ſo remain every where uſeleſs.*

CHAP. XXIV.

How Chriſtians are to live and to be ſincere.

1. CHriſtians ſhould not indulge to the Luſts of the lower belly or to the pleaſures of a nice or gluttonous palat; they ſhould abſtain from all vanity and unde-

cency in their Apparel, and from all idle ſports that are too expenſive of time; and their life ſhould be free from ſloth and negligence, from ambition and pride, and from covetouſneſs and deſire of riches. Anger ought not to lodge in their breaſt, and they ſhould never do that to others which they would not have done to themſelves. They ſhould do nothing careleſly, nor yet raſhly, leaſt of all deceitfully and hypocritically. Chriſtian duties and acts of virtue that are not done in Spirit and Truth, with attention and a good intention, are meer diſſembling and pageantry. In ſome places where Religion is made a Theatrical repreſentation, you ſhall often find men of wicked lives act the higheſt virtues of the greateſt Saints; one the conſtancy of Martyrs, another the modeſty of the Bleſſed Virgin, or perhaps the heroick actions of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles: but the end of the play puts an end to their fine diſſembling; they no longer appear thoſe holy men they were, but preſently return to their nature, to their prophaneneſs and impurity. Juſt ſo are they that have a fair ſpecious out-ſide, appearing preciſe and godly, to be ſeen and praiſed, or drive an intereſt; they are meer jugglers and ſtage-players, they put a fair vizard over an ugly face, holineſs outwardly, inwardly unmortified luſts and perverſe paſſions; *Their lives*

are

are nothing but a Comedy, that will have a Tragical end.

2. For indeed, this is the cause why so many are not so perfect and holy, as their Christian faith requires and would enable them to be, that they are not sincere, but want truth in the inward parts. The false opinions of the World, are of greater power with them, than the precepts and the examples of *Christ:* and those moral virtues which nature it self recommends, are commonly made sin, or subservient to it, by the depraved judgments and customs of men. We therefore that live in a crooked and perverse generation, among corrupt and deceived persons, ought seriously and often to make this inquiry; whether we our selves do know the right way, and whether we truly follow it? Now that way, which is the way of truth, is one and altogether unchangeable, and they that will keep it without change; must not look to the World, but up to Heaven; must not follow the example of men, but must directly follow God, *who alone is the way, the truth, and the life.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

That a hearty affection is the life of good actions.

1. WE muſt have a ſpecial care that the ſenſitive part of us have not the principal concern in our good works, and that we be not led by ſenſe in our actions: for ſenſe is the great deceiver, the fountain of error; therefore 'tis ſaid, that the mortification of ſenſe, is the life of truth. And hence it is that we cannot be confident, ever to have done any thing perfectly good and without defect, becauſe that we bear a part in our beſt works, and as far as they proceed from us, they are ſtain'd with imperfection, although they be done upon Gods account, and by the impulſe and aſſiſtance of divine Grace. Thus it was ſaid to the Angel or Biſhop of *Sardis*, Rev. 3. 2. *I have not found thy works perfect before God:* and thus it might be ſaid to any other. For our Prayers, Faſtings, and Alms, and ſuch like good works, though they may appear complete before men, who ſee nothing but the outſide, yet before God who ſearcheth the heart, they are defective; and

and cannot be acceptable in the leaſt, except they be done with a pure and ſincere intention to pleaſe him.

2. Of ten Virgins mention'd in the Goſpel, five fooliſh were excluded from the wedding; not but that they were Virgins and had lamps, that is, works: but becauſe they wanted the oil of good intentions and holy affections. This may well be the caſe of every one of us; our works will be dead before God, and unpleaſing to him, except we breath life into them, by our inward ſanctified ſpirit, and fervent love to God. In outward acts and appearance, all Chriſtians are almoſt alike: but as the hand of a watch is mov'd by the hidden ſprings, and as the colour of the face depends on the ſecret conſtitution of the body: ſo the good are diſtinguiſht from the bad by their inward ſpirit, or *the hidden man of the heart*; *for the Kingdom of God is within us.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Whence the goodneſs of our works proceeds.

1. AS many that eat much, yet are feeble and infirm and lean, becauſe they overcharge their ſtomach, ſo that their nouriſhment is not well concocted: and as many that eat very moderately, yet becauſe they digeſt well, are ſtrong and healthy and long-liv'd: So likewiſe ſome Chriſtians there are that do many good things, and yet themſelves become little better, becauſe they go not the right way to work. They think that by doing much, they muſt become great proficients, though they do it remiſly and incurioufly: whereas to do our duty every day with greater fervency and exactneſs, is the right way to perfection; *a few things well done profit more, than heaps of works done negligently.*

2. For ſo, there are others that compared to theſe firſt do but little, and yet increaſe much in the love of God, becauſe they endeavour always to work with greater affection, and a more upright intention: ſo that at the end of every good action, they

may

may in ſome manner, uſe that expreſſion of *Chriſt* on the Croſs, Joh. 19.30. *It is finiſhed*; I have in this, as far as was poſſible, done what God required of me, as perfectly as my infirmity would allow, and his free grace enabled me, who gives us to will and to do, and without whom we can do nothing. They ſo ſpend each day, that at night, they can ſay, *It is finiſhed*: and they ſo ſpend their whole life that when 'tis ended, they can ſay with an holy and humble confidence, I have now perfected that work which God had appointed me to do. *He that lives ſo, lives like a Chriſtian, and he ſhall not fear in the evil day.*

CHAP. XXVII.

How uſeful and comfortable is the conſideration of God being always preſent.

1. NOthing will more prevail to make perfect our works as much as is poſſible, than to conſider that God is preſent every where, and that from him and in him, all things have their being, power and motion. This is the moſt preſſing Argument why we ſhould always act with the greateſt

greateſt circumſpection, that God ſees the things that are in ſecret and we can never be hid from his eyes; that in him we live and move and have our being, and that he never forſakes us, till we forſake him to turn our affections upon the creatures. For this is the unhappy effect of our original corruption, that our ſenſes are ſo affected and pleaſed with material things preſent, that our mind is drawn from the contemplation of Gods preſence and things as yet inviſible: whereas, if the love of this world did not bear too great a ſway in our heart, we could ſee God in every place; holy affections would always ſee him who is the Author of all holineſs; according to the ſaying of our Bleſſed Saviour, Mat. 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in heart for they ſhall ſee God.*

2. For indeed 'tis not to be expreſt, how ſweet and comfortable is the goodneſs of God which he hath laid up for them that fear him: but laid up it is; none have a ſenſe of it but they that love God; they alone taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is. For 'tis not enough to have a treaſure, we muſt know we have it, before we can be rich, and we muſt know the uſe and the worth of it: Now ſuch a treaſure we have within us, as is of an ineſtimable infinite value, and yet we ſeem not to know it, for we run after motes and ſhadows, and catch

catch at painted drops that cannot quench our thirſt, as the Pſalmiſt ſaith, *O ye ſons of men, how long will ye love vanities and ſeek after lies?* Thus we are cheated and underſtand not our own happineſs, *for God is preſent to us every moment and we could always enjoy him; we are rich and we know it not.*

3. We could if we would anticipate the joys of Heaven; we could now have a taſte of the felicity of beatified Saints, but that we indulge Senſe to the prejudice of the Soul; we ſhake off the thoughts and the comforts of Gods preſence, becauſe it puts a reſtraint upon our appetites: And when at any time Spiritual joys are denyed us, we preſently ſeek for Earthly pleaſures; becauſe we open not the eyes of our Faith to ſee God preſent, and we embrace him not with devout affection, and we care not to converſe with him. This is the way to Perfection which God himſelf ſhewed to *Abraham*, to have always a ſenſe of the Divine preſence; Gen. 17. 1. *I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect:* Holy *David* likewiſe made a great uſe of this, to be always mindful that God is with us, Pſal. 16. 8. *I have ſet the Lord always before me, becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved. He can never but be happy, that dwells with the Author of all happineſs.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Why the imitation of Gods Saints appears difficult.

1. WE think it a matter of great difficulty to follow the example of those Christian Worthies that have gone before us, because we represent them to our selves, as being now of another nature, freed from the body, inhabitants of the mansions of bliss, whence anger, lust, and all temptations are for ever banish'd, and where they enjoy peace and joy and eternal felicities. But if we really desire to follow their steps, and to conform our lives to theirs, then are we to consider, that as we are so were they, mortal men, cumbred with the uneasie burthen of the flesh, infected with sin, tempted by sinful affections, and exposed to miseries and dangers: but that by Faith they overcame all these, *subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, and by fighting obtain'd the Crown.*

2. *Elias* (saith St. *James* 5. 17.) *was a man subject to the like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it*

it rained not on the Earth by the space of three years and six months: and again he prayed, and the Heaven gave rain, and the Earth brought forth her fruit. The same may be said of any other Saints, that have done the greatest wonders; they were like us, made of the same clay, and subject to the same passions and temptations, while they were on Earth. They were only above us in this, that with great and assiduous pains, they conquered pride and lust, and escaped the snares of the Devil, by diligent care and invincible resolution. Why then do we draw back and make delays? to them that are truly resolved and willing, 'tis not difficult to become Saints, by the imitation of those that have gone before us; if shaking off our sloth and laziness we would seriously endeavour, we might by the help of Divine Grace arrive to the same height of Sanctification and bliss, as they have. *For he hath proceeded far towards holiness, that sincerely desires to be holy.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

How we ſhould in all things aim at Gods Glory.

1. IT is the precept of St. *Paul*, that God ſhould be the end of all our works, that they may be good and acceptable. 1 Cor. 10. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God:* and again, Col. 3. 17. *Whatſoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord* Jeſus, *giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* For a good work which is not done upon Gods account, doth become evil, it being the nature of virtue to receive its form from the end, rather than from the act. And if we cleave to the creatures and love them for their own ſake without reference to God, this is that luſt or ſinful love which Saint *John* condemns, 1 Ep. 2. 15. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World*; love them not ſo as to reſt in them. For here we are Pilgrims, Travellers going home, to our Fathers houſe, to our God: and ſo what creatures we meet in our way, we may uſe them as conveniences to carry us forward, towards him: but we may

may not dwell with them, as if we were at our journeys end. God alone is to be lov'd for himself, he alone being infinitely good, and the last and best end we can propound to our selves; in him alone our appetites shall rest satisfied, our enjoyment shall be secure, and our joys undisturb'd for ever. Whosoever knows not and pursues not this end, knows not why he lives, nor how to live well: but he that knows it, knows whither to direct his intentions, and whither to tend in all his actions.

2. It is granted that some natural actions, as to walk, to eat, to sleep, and such like, are of themselves neither good nor evil: yet all Divines teach that they become sin, if we do them not to some further and better end, that is, to live to serve God; whose glory should be the ultimate design of all mens actions, because as he is the beginning, so should he be the end of all things. *The light of the Body is the Eye* (saith our Blessed Saviour, Mat. 6. 22.) *if therefore thine Eye be single, thine whole Body shall be full of light: but if thine Eye be evil, thine whole Body shall be full of darkness.* This Eye is the intention of every man in his actions; if it be not good, they become works of darkness: and good it cannot be, except it be refer'd to God, the supreme goodness. *Every good thing comes from God, and whatever returns not to him is evil.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Self-love is the root of all evil.

1. AFter our firſt Parent, by preferring himſelf to God, committed that grievous tranſgreſſion, whereby all mankind became obnoxious to death; luſt and ignorance: darkneſs and evil propenſities ſeiz'd upon our nature, man forſook God, and turn'd to ſeek himſelf, and having loſt all ſenſe of ſpiritual comfort, ran diſſolutely after carnal pleaſures. Hence Self-love the greateſt Enemy to virtue, came to tyrannize over men, who to comply with it, ſeek nothing now but wealth, honours, and ſenſual delights. And now, ſaith the Apoſtle, Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; for all its inſtincts and impulſes have a tendency to ſin, and to ſin only.*

2. And yet ſelf-love which ſeeks ſo much our own eaſe and ſatisfaction, is indeed its chiefeſt hinderance; for God having created us for his glory, and enjoyn'd us to deſign it always; when by ſelf-love we ſeek only our ſelves and our own advantage, we do nothing whereby to obtain Gods favour and

and eternal life, but rather fall into a wretched ſtate of damnation; *we are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live after the fleſh* (ſaith Saint *Paul*, *Rom.* 8. 13.) *For if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the ſpirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.* Now to this mortification, we are ſtrongly oblig'd by Chriſtian Religion; its great deſign is to bring us out of our ſelves to God, that as we yielded our members ſervants to uncleanneſs and to iniquity, even ſo now we ſhould yield them ſervants to righteouſneſs unto holineſs; as it is written, *Be ye holy, for I am holy*, ſaith the Lord. *Lev.* 11. 45.

3. Now as Chriſtianity checks and reſtrains ſelf-love, ſo doth ſelf-love keep men from underſtanding and approving the Chriſtian doctrines; for how can he that ſeeks and loves himſelf, rightly apprehend that whatever the world dotes upon, is meer vanity: that Eſtates and Honours bring great vexations and great ſlavery: that to forgive Enemies and do good to them that hate us, is the part of a noble and generous mind: that 'tis better to deſpiſe than to poſſeſs riches: that 'tis more honourable to be ſubject where God commands, than to bear rule and to domineer: that for a man to reſtrain his appetite and conquer himſelf, is more glorious than to win battels and take fenced Cities? Theſe are Paradoxes,

doxes, hard and incredible ſayings to the ſelf-lover, whoſe fondneſs of himſelf ties him faſt to this earth, to whatever can be uſeful and any ways pleaſant to the fleſh: whereas the Children of God live to God, being not led and govern'd by the fleſh, but by the ſpirit: they live in the fleſh, but not after the fleſh; ſome of their actions are natural, whileſt they are in the body, yet they proceed from a ſupernatural principle, and are deſigned to a nobler end; for they continually deny themſelves and mortifie all ſenſual unruly deſires. Self-lovers hold a great regard ſhould be had to the fleſh; 'tis true, but it muſt be ſuch as *Chriſt* hath taught us; to keep it under: otherwiſe Saint *Paul* hath declar'd, that to *be carnally minded is death.*

CHAP. XXXI.

That Self-love is that Babylon out of which God hath called us.

1. GOD at firſt placed man in Paradiſe, but *Adam*, in whom we all ſinned, tranſported us into this world out of Paradiſe, out of *Jeruſalem* into *Babylon*, out of our freedom into ſlavery, out of integrity into corruption, out of our countrey into baniſhment,

nishment, and out of life into death. Thus from truth and perfection we fell into vanity, we are now like unto vanity, nay, *every man is but vanity*, as the Psalmist saith, *Psal.* 39. 6. Man is vain in his body, which ends in death and corruption; vain in his soul, which being inslav'd to sin, is obnoxious to death eternal, and vain in all his outward enjoyments, which all perish, or must be forsaken when he dies. Yet man strangely dotes on this vanity; he passionately runs after these transitory things which are all cheats and lies, whereby he is drawn into thousands of pernicious errors, and out of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, into a Hellish *Babylon*.

2. Now these two Cities are built by two sorts of love; to love God, so as to despise our selves, makes the City of God: and to love our selves so as to despise God, makes the Devils *Babylon*, the City of this World. The way to this, is broad and short; to that, is streight, difficult and long: because dull and earthly as now we are, we more easily fall on the earth and descend down to Hell, than we can raise up our selves and ascend to Heaven. Let every man therefore examine himself and find out what he chiefly loves; for if he loves God, so as to deny himself, he is doubtless a Citizen of the *Jerusalem* which is from above; but if he loves himself, so as to pre-

prefer his own desires to God, 'tis plain he belongs to that *Babylon* out of which God hath called his Children. For thus the Scripture cries aloud, *Go ye forth of Babylon, and remove out of the midst of her:* (Isa. 48. 20. Jer. 50. 8.) and again the Psalmist, Psal. 137. 8. *O Daughter of Babylon who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.* We come out of *Babylon* when we leave the confusion of sin, forsaking our disorderly course of life: and we dash the children of *Babylon* against the stone, when our love to *Christ* overcomes our ill desires and ill inclinations. *Self-love is the death of the Soul, and the love of God is its life: therefore he doth not truly love himself, who by self-love destroys himself.*

CHAP. XXXII.

How men naturally seek themselves even in their best works.

1. IT may seem strange to observe, that whereas mens opinions and inclinations are so various and different, yet all men are agreed in this, that none appears vile to himself, none is willing to yield and submit

mit to others, none though never ſo mean but thinks himſelf ſomebody, and is deſirous to be taken notice of; every one ſeeks to be higher than others; every one is indulgent to himſelf, and ſevere to others: all men will have their will and their ſaying; all applaud to their own inventions and conceits, and cenſure others; they count their own follies, wiſdome; and notwithſtanding their great ignorance, there is nothing but what they think to know. They carefully hide their own faults, and pretend to thoſe virtues, they know they have not. And what is moſt of all to be wonder'd at, even good men who endeavour to pleaſe God, and ſeem to aim at nothing but his honour and glory: Even they, ſometimes in their beſt actions, by a ſecret and natural inſtinct, almoſt unknown to themſelves, ſeek their own comfort and complacency, moſt of all; and the more excellent are their works, the more ſubtil and undiſcernable is this ſnare, which ſelf-love ſets to the moſt ſpiritual.

2. What better than to obey God, to read his Sacred Word and preach it, to receive and adminiſter his Holy Sacraments? Yet theſe duties are commonly ſtain'd with ſome ſecret deſire of praiſe: and except the Chriſtian be very watchful over his own heart, he may eaſily loſe his better reward. *Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and*

Angels (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1.) *and have not Charity, I am become like ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal.* And though a man ſhould give all his goods to the Poor, and even his Body to be burnt, yet without Charity, without the love of God hath purified his heart, it will profit him nothing. According to the ſaying of the Prophet *Haggai*, 1. 6. *Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: and he that earns wages, earneth wages to put into a bag with holes:* for thus good works avail nothing, if done out of reſpect to our ſelves, and not to pleaſe God. This being therefore the bent of our corrupt nature, to draw us to our ſelves, we ought carefully to examine our ſelves, and ſearch the hidden corners of our hearts, that there lurk not in them ſome ill purpoſe of vain-glory or ſelf-intereſt, to mix with our beſt actions, either firſt or laſt. *This is the Rule of a true Chriſtian Life, always to ſeek and love the things of God, and never his own.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Things which every Chriſtian is bound to know in order to obedience.

1. EVery Diſciple of *Chriſt* ought to know thoſe Divine and Human Laws under which he lives, and the which he is oblig'd to obſerve. The Divine are contain'd in the Ten Commandments, and in the New Teſtament, which contains the precepts of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Faith obligeth all the Faithful to believe the doctrines of Chriſtianity, as they are ſum'd up in our Creed. By Hope we truſt, by the grace of God, and our own ſincere endeavour, to obtain and uſe all neceſſary means of Grace, and Eternal Life at laſt; all which, in this aſſurance, we heartily beg in the Lord's Prayer. And Charity requires of us to love God above all things, and our Neighbour as our ſelves. A Chriſtian by theſe three virtues is made a new and holy creature; Faith inlightens and directs his underſtanding: Hope raiſeth him up, and ſets his will at work for God: and to God Charity unites him wholly. It is alſo neceſſary to underſtand the neceſſity of Bap-

tiſm and the Lord's Supper, and true Repentance, which are all Divine Inſtitutions, indiſpenſably neceſſary to all that will be ſaved. *For except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* Joh. 3. 5. And *Except we eat the fleſh and drink the bloud of* Chriſt, *we have no life in us.* Joh. 6. 53. And as for Repentance, it is the only remedy we have for the ſins committed after Baptiſm, that by it we may be made clean again.

2. Laſtly, there are alſo Human Laws, Enacted by the Church or the State we live in, and them we are alſo to know and to obſerve with meekneſs and humility, and for Conſcience ſake. But no man of himſelf is able to keep all theſe Laws which God hath bound upon us; none can obey them without the true light from above enlighten and guide him, as it is written, Pſal. 94. 12. *Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſtneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him in thy Law.* For ever ſince ſin came into the World, men without the light of Faith, ſit in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, and take an account of good and evil, not by the meaſures of truth, but by their luſts and depraved paſſions. We muſt therefore earneſtly beg the divine aſſiſtance, that he that commands what he wills, would enable us to do what he hath commanded: healing our blindneſs and impotency; deſtroying

ing ſelf-love and filling our hearts with devout love to him: *for the end of the Commandment is Charity: and he that truly loves God keeps his Commandments without hypocriſie or reſervation.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

The difference betwixt the outward and the inward man.

1. OUR Chriſtian hope is not for this World, nor for this preſent time, and we were not created to enjoy that Earthly happineſs which the World only ſeeks: but God made us for that Eternal Bliſs which he hath promiſed, and whoſe excellency we cannot as yet underſtand; *For eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither is it entred into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.* We therefore that are called to the poſſeſſion of that Kingdom, which was prepared for us, from the beginning of the World, ought not to govern our ſelves only by human reaſons, and live by natural inſtincts, after the common manner of men, who are unacquainted with the ways of Eternity, and the motions of Divine Grace. But happy

are they that wiſely dive into the depth of things, who live to God and commune with him in their hearts, and ſuffer not their thoughts and affections to range and dwell abroad.

2. Theſe men live an inward life, they are recollected and dwell at home; always diſpoſed to hear Gods voice within them, and to underſtand his ſecrets. Whereas they live an outward life that are moſt affected with outward things: having fair pretences for their worldly-mindedneſs, being greedy of news, and curious ſights, and ſenſual pleaſures, *walking* (ſaith the Apoſtle *Eph.* 4. 17.) *in the vanity of their minds, alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.* For the more a man profits in carnal wiſdom, the more ignorant he becomes in the things of God. *As much as we love the creatures, as much we leſſen our love to the Creator.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXV.

How dangerous it is to be governed by opinion and false apprehension of things.

1. HE is a wise man that weighs things justly, and then esteems them according to their intrinsick value: for every thing in the world hath a twofold aspect or a double face, the one natural and real, and the other disguised and fallacious. The first is what God judgeth and hath revealed it to be: and the second depends on mens passions and false opinions. Thus for Example; the Dignity of a Bishop is in effect and according to Gods appointment, a high and Angelic office, of such a weight as should make human strength tremble and shrink under it; it is a place of great honour, but also it requires the greatest labour and diligence, to watch for the Souls intrusted with the dignified Prelat, who shall give a strict account for them in the day of judgment. But in the Worlds account, a Bishoprick is only a degree of honour in the Church, which promotes the owner of it to riches and greatness and temporal advantages. Hence it is that they that rightly

apprehend what the office is, fear and avoid it, and are ſo far from ſeeking, that they refuſe it when offer'd: and it is much to be feared that they follow the worlds judgements, and ſeek themſelves, that ſeek it, and make it their aim, and the object of their paſſionate deſires. The ſame may be ſaid of all other dignities and places of truſt, in Church and State; Generally men have a wrong notion of them, and underſtand not their definition: and hence the confuſions and malvorſations that are in the world, that men miſtake things, and hate truth, and will not ſee nor follow divine light, but the darkneſs of their own perverſe hearts.

2. Such names are commonly uſed amongſt men as are conſecrated by the Bloud of *Chriſt*, and the higheſt virtues of his greateſt Saints; as that ſome be called Biſhops, Prieſts, Deacons, Monks or Hermits; Some Kings, Princes, and Magiſtrates; and all together, Chriſtians: but who is there that duly conſiders the great worth, the ſtrength, and true ſignifications of thoſe names? what virtues, what perpetual care, what duties, they require from ſuch as bear them; the bare Titles, with a vain ſhadow of the things remain, but the reality and ſignificancy of them is vaniſh'd: few men are in truth what they call themſelves, few live according to the name of Chriſtian, becauſe few make it their firſt care to follow the example

ample of *Christ*. This unhappy deceit is also an effect of the first and worst of evils, Self-love, the most crafty deceiver: hardly found out by the wisest, and seldome quite conquer'd by the best of men.

3. The truth is, that the good and evil things of this present life, are so mixt and confused, that if we take an exact view of the nature of them, we shall hardly discern the one from the other: for they are all vain and uncertain, and in a moment they come to nothing. Wherefore *David* the man after Gods own heart, passing by all temporal things, entertain'd his meditation with things Eternal, *I have considered the days of old, and the years of Eternity*, Psal. 77. 5. And *Solomon* his Son, the wisest of men, after a long and comprehensive enumeration of all things good and bad, under the Sun, concludes *that all is vanity, vanity of vanities*. Eccles. 1. 2.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Three things very profitable and necessary to every Christian.

1. THat we may be faithful to God as we are oblig'd, we must of necessity attend to these three things. First, to watch and observe our selves and our actions, at all times, that we turn not aside out of the right path, into by-ways, difficult and unpassable, seeking for happiness where it is not, in spight of all admonitions. By reason, a Christian differs from the brutes, and by Faith from unbelievers; so that when he doth any thing rashly and basely meerly to satisfie his unruly passion and his appetite, so far he becomes a beast and ceaseth to act as man: and likewise, when for vain-glory or self-interest he is drawn to action, in this he acts like a Heathen, Faith hath no hand in it. As Arts are attained and perfected by working according to the rules of them: so a man becomes Wise, Just, Sober and Patient, by living according to the prescript of those Virtues.

2. The second thing recommended is a good and careful use of our time, on which depends

depends Eternity. Philosophers would have us not only know things useful, but also be studious and watchful to take hold of all opportunities of virtue: because time passeth away and comes not again, and once lost is lost for ever. Time flies away, and the unwise man considers not, that 'tis never to be recall'd, and that with time he loseth more than he can think or ever recover. It may be pleasant indeed to pass away the time in sports and merry company: but so doth our day go away, and the night comes when no man can work, and we lose *the acceptable time*, that time that was given us to obtain our Pardon and work out our Salvation in. *We must give an accounnt for every idle word, much more for that time which is spent idly,*

3. The third thing we are carefully to mind, is to make a right use of the Sacraments, especially that of the Lord's Supper, which if frequently and devoutly received, would be to us a fountain of grace, profitable beyond expression: and the more, in that penitence as a *Sacramental* is joyn'd to it, whereby we are humbled and cleansed, and our hearts prepar'd to entertain *Christ*, whom we receive in the Holy Communion, and from whom we receive increase of love to God, and of meekness and charity to men. As a covetous man minds nothing but gain and money, and is always

gasping

gaſping after it: ſo the devout Chriſtian duly and often receives the Bleſſed Euchariſt, always pants and longs after God, and cannot without trouble mind any thing but him. *And it is the principle of a heavenly life, to deſpiſe and forſake all things that have not a relation to God.*

CHAP. XXXVII.

That Repentance is neceſſary to all Chriſtians.

1. EVery Chriſtian ought ſo to live and die, in ſuch continual regret and mortification, as to make it appear he is a true Penitent, who endeavours to make what ſatisfaction he can for his ſins, and entirely to be cleanſed from the guilt of them. This was the beginning and is the ſum of the Goſpel, Mark 1. 4. *John did baptize in the wilderneſs and Preach the Baptiſm of Repentance, for the Remiſſion of ſins.* And the Bleſſed *Jeſus* himſelf, the Author and finiſher of our Faith, made it the firſt ſubject of his preaching; Verſe 14. *Jeſus came into Galilee Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God and ſaying, the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, repent ye and believe*

believe the Goſpel: Or as Saint *Matthew* relates it, 4. 17. *Jeſus began to preach and to ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* Repentance was firſt ſent to prepare men duly to entertain the Goſpel, that their Souls might be purified and fitted to receive Divine Grace, which never enters wicked hearts, nor abides with them that yield their bodies to be inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs.

2. But Penitence is a Sacrifice well pleaſing to God, when a man is ſenſible of his ſin, and confeſſeth it with ſhame and ſorrow, and with a broken contrite heart begs Pardon of his offended God. For the greateſt evil in ſin, is a contempt of the Divine Majeſty; to live in ſin, is to live in enmity and defiance againſt the Great and Holy God: and to this deſperate impiety men are betrayed by infidelity, and by inconſideration. For who is there ſo mad and preſumptuous that would dare tranſgreſs the Divine Laws, if he believed and underſtood that God is Almighty and infinitely Good and Glorious, and that an offence againſt ſo high a Majeſty is heinous beyond expreſſion? But to this height of wretched folly, men are carried by original depravation, that as being ſeiz'd on by an unhappy frenzy, they have a ſecret averſion to God the chiefeſt good, and delight themſelves in impure ſhadows, in baſe and falſe enjoy-

enjoyments; and this becauſe they ſee not the truth, or they have not power to follow it.

3. How great and deplorable is this blindneſs and impotency, we cannot well underſtand, except we ſeriouſly conſider, that the guilt and malignancy of ſin was ſo extreme, that nothing could make expiation for it, but the bitter death and paſſion of the Bleſſed and only Son of God. This if we believe, and if we are ſenſible of the intolerable burthen of our ſins, we are to paſs our days in ſorrow, and to ſpend our years in mourning, thereby to own our ſelves guilty, and that we have deſerv'd the worſt, the greateſt of evils. *For God readily forgives thoſe ſins which penitence and amendment indeavour to undo.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Of the ſigns and effects of true Repentance.

1. WE ſhall never be in a capacity to avoid ſin when the temptation comes, except the ſoul hath conceiv'd a great horror and deteſtation of it: and our penitential exerciſes will ſoon be at an end,

end, except we hunger and thirst after Righteousness, so as never to be satiated without it. Therefore when we humble and punish our selves, and when we make our confession to God or his ministers, we should, besides contrition and a resolution in general to sin no more, design the extirpation of some one particular sin, to avoid and prevent the occasions of that one sin which is most dangerous and importunate. Hence will accrue to us a great advantage of our penitence, and we shall the better bring forth fruits worthy of Repentance, such as these; fear to offend and displease God any ways, a great dread of his just judgment, to check and reprove our selves with shame and confusion of face, to be ready to make all satisfaction and amends possible for past offences, to restrain and mortify all sinful appetites, carefully to avoid all the ways and allurements to sin, to humble our selves and willingly to bear contempt, frequently to examine our conscience and search the secrets of our hearts; to root out, as much as is possible, all vicious desires and inclinations, and to set in their stead all virtuous and holy affections.

2. They that make this their serious and constant employment have their own sins before their eyes, but have no eyes for the sins of others; they grieve for their own offences,

offences, and puniſh their own follies, but they paſs by or excuſe the faults of others; they ſee their own danger, and are always afraid of falling, and always watchful not to fall. For our neceſſary converſe with the World, our ill cuſtoms, and our dwelling with baits and temptations, expoſeth us to ſin, and yet takes the ſenſe of it from us: eſpecially our evil inclinations, which being born with us, have a ſtrong party in our hearts, and begin by times to deprave or harden Conſcience, that it ſhall hardly have any feeling of ſins daily committed. *And then this is the unhappineſs of contracting ill habits, that the oftner we act by them, the more we confirm them, and the leſs we obſerve our faults and errors.*

CHAP. XXXIX.

Remedies againſt ordinary failings, and greater ſins.

1. TO fall into thoſe ſins which ſome call Venial, or ſins of daily incurſion, is hardly to be avoided; and yet even thoſe ſins cannot be ſaid to be little that are committed againſt a great God, and for which we muſt ſuffer Eternal Torments,

ments, if we our selves were to make expiation for them. But though there is pardon for those unavoidable errors which without a special grace, we cannot but commit at some time: yet ought we to endeavour with all our power daily to lessen the number of them, and to prevent them by acts of contrary virtues, one by one. To that end, we should be as careful as men are in contagious times, who not only avoid infected persons, but also all that hath toucht and been about them: so should we in the case of those sins that are counted light, avoid and stop all the ways and avenues that lead to them, *Lest we falling frequently, at last fall into the pit of death.*

2. Every moment almost we have some temptation to vain talk or vain inquisitiveness, to anger or unseemly jesting, to contention or impatience, to idle thoughts and distraction, or to such like sins, which are the more difficult to be avoided, that being mixt with all our worldly affairs, they are hardly to be discern'd. Therefore we must at least secure this, that however our nature stands affected to any of those lesser sins, yet our hearts may not entertain any love for them, lest our own affections hinder us, carefully to watch and strive against them. Without this, our after-Repentance and our Sacramental vow will signifie little

to

to obtain remiſſion of them, or victory againſt them. I know that 'tis ſaid of theſe failings, that *the juſt man falls ſeven times a day:* but yet certain it is, that the juſt man endeavours againſt it, and that he never falls, but by frailty or by ſudden ſurpriſe.

3. Likewiſe for vices or greater ſins, to conquer them you muſt ſtifle them in the birth, ſuppreſs the firſt motion to them, and meet the temptation with an act of virtue contrary to it. As for example, if you be abuſed and provok'd, refrain the firſt ſtirring of Anger, and then buſie your mind with ſome act of Patience and Humility, conſidering that you ſuffer that, and leſs than that you deſerve, praying for him that doth you wrong, and reſolving to do him any kindneſs you can. For thus we beſt avoid evil by ſtudying to do that which is good, and the laſt is as much our duty as the firſt: and that ſervant deſerves no great reward who doth not ſtrike and revile his maſter, if he doth not withal, faithfully ſerve and obey him. In this many deceive themſelves, who think to have made ſure work of their Salvation, becauſe they have not been wicked, when yet they have neglected poſitive duties, and have not done thoſe good works which God requir'd from them. *Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do good, both are equally commanded, not to tranſgreſs by omiſſion no more than commiſſion.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XL.

Clergy-men have some especial obligations, though all are bound to endeavour after perfection.

1. THough the same institutes of Christian perfection be delivered to all, and all are to walk by the same rule, as has been shew'd before, Chap. 7. Yet it cannot be denyed, but that Clergy-mens obligations to a strict devout life, are much inforced upon them, by their particular calling: For they are not only oblig'd to be holy themselves, but also *by their life and doctrine to set forth the glory of God, and set forward the Salvation of all men.* In order to which, they must be very careful so to follow after virtue, and all things that are honest and of good report, so to live, and so to converse with men, that their words and actions may speak them, and others may acknowledge them, to be indeed the sons of God, and ministers of *Christ*: and to this the least neglect and remissness will be very prejudicial, because they are observ'd by all, and

and men generally are apt to judge and to follow the worſt.

2. They muſt remember that as all Chriſtians are but Stewards and have nothing of their own, and muſt uſe the World as not poſſeſſing it, and as being ready to part with it: ſo they more eſpecially are to count nothing their own, and that little they have as well as themſelves, muſt be ſubſervient to the deſign of their function. They muſt remember that they are not only as others oblig'd to live by the Goſpel-Rules, but that beſides, they have devoted themſelves to the ſervice of the Church, and have vow'd obedience to its conſtitutions, and ſo far are barr'd from their own will, which muſt comply with that order and commiſſion they have taken. And moſt of all let them remember that *Chriſt* himſelf, whoſe ſervant they are, humbled himſelf, came in the form of a ſervant, became of no reputation, became poor for us, though he were Lord of all, and became obedient to the death, *Profeſſing he was not come do his own will, but the will of him that ſent him.*

3. What will it avail to read the inſtructions and examples of *Chriſt* and his Saints, if we follow them not? thoſe things were written for our learning and are ſet before us for our imitation. It hath been ſaid by ſome, that no Chriſtian comes to Heaven, that

that is not a Martyr; we must all be prepar'd for it, and indeed that mortification and self-denyal, which all Christians, especially spiritual guides are oblig'd to use, is a kind of Martyrdom without bloud; is the Crucifixion of our desires and appetites. Too many, 'tis to be confest, live irregularly in their calling, Christian and Ecclesiastical, unmindful of the obligations of that blessed order they are entred in; their indevotion deprives them of the sense and the comforts of Piety, so that they are fain to seek for pleasure abroad, in the enjoyment of the world, because they find it not in their own heart, and the doing of their duty. Many they are that go a stray, and judge that to be best which is done by the most, and follow the broad way in a crowd: but few they are that with sincerity follow *Christ* in the narrow way of the Cross. *It is a great folly to be careless and secure in that way, wherein the best and wisest men have trembled, and walking with the greatest warines, have found it very hard to go right.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

That Prayer is neceſſary to all, and what diſpoſitions are requiſite to make it acceptable.

1. SUch is the neceſſity of Prayer that 'tis become an approved ſaying, that without it none can be ſaved. For who can obey the divine call, *leave all and follow me*, without the aſſiſtance of grace? and who can obtain it without begging for it? therefore we are taught by Holy Scripture, Luke 18. 1. 1 Theſ. 5. 17. *That we ſhould always pray and not faint*, becauſe that always and in all things we want the help and aſſiſtance of God. Now he may be ſaid to pray always, who every day hath his ſet hours of Prayer, which as they return, are obſerv'd duly. He Prays always, who in all things walks uprightly, and with an holy intention deſigns Gods glory; for Prayer is the elevation of the Soul to God. He Prays always, who in his heart preſerves an habitual devotion, and always deſires to Pray; that very deſire is a good Prayer. Laſtly, he

he prays always who always lives well; a good life is a continual Prayer.

2. No man ever became wicked, prophane or heretick, who did not first neglect and cast off this Holy Duty. Prayer is the pipe or conduit which brings Divine Grace into our Souls; take it away, and Grace hath no passage, and the Soul is parch'd and wither'd, and at last by degrees must die. Neither is it enough to mumble over a few orisons, and recite them only with the voice, as too many do, without attention, without reverence, and without devout affections. Of them God complains by his Prophet and his Son. Isa. 29. 13. Mat. 15. 8. *This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* On them shall come the imprecation of the Psalmist, 109. 6. *Let his Prayer be turned into sin.* Their words are lies that work wickedness, and yet sing with Holy *David*, *That they hate sin and love the Law of God:* and they whose God is their belly, and yet profess with him, Psal. 102. 4. *My heart is smitten and withered like grass, so that I forget to eat my bread:* And they that spend their time in mirth and laughter, and yet say with that penitent Prophet, Psal. 42. 3. *My tears have been my meat day and night:* And they that neither regard nor obey divine precepts, and yet pronounce with *David*, *Cursed are they that depart from thy Commandments and are far*

from thy Law. Such Prayers are meer mockeries, they are an abomination to God, and they provoke his wrath, rather than appeaſe him.

3. No man deſerves the name of a Chriſtian, except at leaſt twice a day, morning and evening, he lift up his Soul to God in devout and fervent Prayer: ſpending as much time therein for the comfort and benefit of his immortal ſoul, as he commonly doth for the feeding of his mortal body. And let none intermit or leſſen the duty, becauſe he finds himſelf dry and dull, and wants that holy reliſh and livelineſs of holy affection, which ſometimes he hath felt; for true devotion doth not conſiſt in tears and tender paſſions, and overflowings of ſenſible joys, which may be felt by ſuch as pray to images and falſe deities: but true devotion conſiſts in a ready and well diſpoſed will to ſerve and obey God, and abſtain from all ſin. *God is known and worſhipt by Faith and not by Senſe.*

4. I do not find fault with thoſe rules and directions how to Pray, which are given by pious men; they may be uſeful, but alone they are not ſufficient: For Prayer is not to be learn'd as a Trade, by imitation of the work that lies before us. No, the Art of it is in the Heart, in a careful watch over it, and over our ſenſes. For how can he have the Spirit of Prayer, whoſe Spirit is

is let loose to vanity? How can he approach God, duly to deal with him concerning the Salvation of his Soul, whose Soul is all day taken up with the World, with idle talk and idle business? It is a great error to think that of a sudden a man of clay can raise himself up to Heaven, can do that work which is most Spiritual and most difficult, without serious attention and preparation, nay with the obstacles and distractions of a whole days employment about earthly things. No, Prayer doth require a pure and well composed heart, free from the Images of Worldly concerns, fitted and desirous to entertain it self with God: and the best preparation to this Blessed Duty, is a good and upright life, with a meek and peaceable conversation. He that would daily pray better, should so value Heaven and Heavenly things, that therein may be his comfort, and he may be dead to the World. *That Prayer which is accompanied with true Faith and humility is ever accepted.*

CHAP. XLII.

Why many are not profited by Prayer, and that we ſhould ſtudy to Pray well and frequently.

1. MAny receive little or no advantage from their Prayers and Meditations, becauſe they entertain and cheriſh affections contrary to what they Pray and Meditate; and they make reſervations, and do not wholly devote and offer themſelves to God, to comply in all things with his good pleaſure. They deſire that God would teach them to know and to fulfil his will, and yet they ceaſe not in many things to neglect and to oppoſe it: having as it were, a double heart, one they offer to God when they Pray, the other they reſerve to themſelves, and cannot ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *With my whole heart I have ſought thee.* Others acted by curioſity and the ſpirit of Pride, ſeek after high Speculations and abſtruſe learning, which ſignifies little or nothing to the knowing themſelves, and the maſtering of their ſinful paſſions: and if at any time their Spirit be ſoftned and they find ſome

ſome delight in ſighs and tears; yet ſoon after that delight is gone, they remain impatient of their Humiliation, they return to their former ways, and ſtill remain tangled in their follies and their vicious habits.

2. Hence it is that thoſe ſudden changes or converſions are not durable, which proceed from ſudden and ſtrong commotions; for the violence of that paſſion, which carryed away the Heart, coming to abate, it returns to its former and more pleaſing affections, and ſoon repents of its Repentance. Some ſeek themſelves more than God, in their Prayers, becauſe therein they find ſome refreſhments and Spiritual delights: and ſome ſeek after abſtractions and extatick raptures, to be therein raiſed up to Heaven and know great myſteries: but all theſe will ſignifie nothing without Contrition and Humility. The great benefit of Prayer is to find the World loſe its power and its repute in our Hearts, and to find our wills more reſign'd to God, to patience and to obedience. *He Prays beſt that deſires to know nothing and to obtain nothing, but* Jeſus Chriſt *and him crucified.*

3. It is a common error to think that meditation is a thing exceeding difficult, when indeed every man is daily occupied about it, for to meditate is to revolve and view things in our minds; and that we al-

ways do, vain and worldly, and often ſinful things. Why cannot we then as well conſider the myſteries of Faith and the concerns of our Salvation? Sure we could eaſily, if we would ſeriouſly endeavour to expel the world out of our hearts, then there would be room for the things of God, and we could fix our thoughts upon them. Want of this makes us unfit for Prayer, and unwilling to be crucified to the World, and to bear the Croſs and Reproach of *Chriſt*. We pretend indeed that our occupations are neceſſary, and perhaps good and profitable, ſo that we have a good warrant to diſpenſe with prayer and meditation: but there is a time for all things, and however the buſineſs of the Soul is our chiefeſt concern, and 'tis a great folly to neglect it upon any account.

4. The body without nouriſhment ſoon decays into weakneſs and death, ſo doth the Soul without its proper food, which is prayer: and it wants it the more frequently, in that it hath many more and greater neceſſities than the body hath. For heat and cold, hunger, thirſt and ſickneſs, and whatever affiicts the body, doth alſo vex and prey upon the Soul which is compatible with it: and beſides that, the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh it ſelf, are all Enemies to the Soul, and daily conſpire its ruin, and it hath no ſtrength nor defence,

nor

nor comfort, but from prayer only. We ought therefore always to pray, and devoutly to call upon God, in the inner-man, in the inward receſſes of our Souls, which are the Temple of God, wherein he is pleaſed to dwell. We need not always words in our private Cloſets, God ſees our thoughts, and hears our ſecret deſires. Yet they may uſe books to good purpoſe, that are not uſed to mental prayer. And however the publick Devotions of the Church ought to be ſaid and ſung aloud, and to be conſtant and unalterable. That all the Faithful may agree in them, and edifie one another, by joyning their voices as well as minds, to ſend up their praiſes and petitions to God: *Yet ſtill the heart is the houſe of prayer, and the Kingdom of God is within us.*

CHAP. XLIII.

How to Pray, and avoid diſtractions, and fix the intention.

1. THat our Prayer may be truly good and acceptable, we muſt endeavour to ask all things out of love to God. For though a thing be good in it ſelf, yet

the ſureſt and better way it is to deſire and demand it upon Gods account, becauſe it will pleaſe him, that Self-love may not be the principle and purpoſe of our petitions. The ground on which our prayer muſt reſt, is a lively Faith, and a ſenſe of the preſence of God, whom we muſt approach with an humble ſimplicity; as much as may be like an Infant brought to his Mothers breaſt. He is not altogether intent to his devotion, that conſiders himſelf praying; for whileſt he reflects on his prayer, his mind is diverted from God to whom he prays, and ſometimes he is diſtracted, indeavouring to avoid diſtraction. Therefore I ſay, ſimplicity is beſt in prayer; to think of nothing but God, to look to none but him whom we worſhip.

2. For his mind ſhall hardly be drawn to other objects that ſhall conſider God as preſent; the immenſity of divine perfections will abſorb his thoughts; they ſhall ſail in that boundleſs Ocean, and find no limits, and all other things but God will be out of ſight. But the perfection of this, is reſerv'd for a better State; here we muſt expect diſtractions, and if we duly ſtrive againſt them, they ſhall not make our prayers to be unprofitable: For God will hear them and aſſiſt us, whileſt we contend with our infirmities. Yet we ſhall ſooner be freed from ill and idle thoughts, by ſlighting them,

them, and taking off our minds from attending to them, than by fencing and fighting againſt them: for ſometimes whileſt we ſtand to confute them, they make the deeper impreſſions on perplext and timorous hearts. *A Prayer dry, without reliſh and comfort, is the more acceptable to God, in that it is unpleaſing to Nature.*

3. As Travellers always bear in mind the place whither they would go, ſo they that pray ſhould always be mindful of the deſign of Prayer, which is to be united to God, as much as is poſſible in this life; to have our will made conform unto his, in all things; to aim at any thing but this, is to loſe our labour. Now prayer may be ſaid to be of two ſorts, the one common and ordinary, perform'd by our endeavour and diligent application, together with the aſſiſtance of Grace; *For no man can ſay that* Jeſus *is the Lord, but by the Spirit:* the other extraordinary and infuſed, more ſecret and myſterious, *with ſighs unutterable.* We may beg the gift of both, for God is free and very gracious: yet we muſt apply our ſelves to that which is more common, and wherein we have a part to act; which conſiſteth in a bleſſed diſpoſition to lift up our Soul to God, and entertain holy affections, and pour out our hearts before him. This God is ready to grant to ſuch as truſt in him, and are of a meek and humble

Spirit; for *every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.* Therefore ought we to begin our prayers with an humble acknowledgement of our being nothing but misery and impotency, and wretched sinfulness: and withall, we should take care to fix our intention aright, that God may be glorified, and his will may be done, and we may cheerfully fulfill it. *Now this is the will of God, even your Sanctification.*

CHAP. XLIV.

The great advantages of Prayer.

1. WHat is written concerning Wisdome, may very well be said of Prayer. Wisd. 7. *I preferr'd her before Scepters and Thrones, and esteemed Riches nothing in comparison of her; I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light, for the light that cometh from her never goeth out: All good things together came to me with her, and innumerable riches in her hand: and I rejoyced in them all, because she goeth before them, and I knew not that she was the mother of them; she is a Treasure unto men, that never*

never faileth, which they that use become the friends of God. For indeed, Prayer is a fountain of grace, a parent and nurse to all virtues; it increaseth the joy of them that rejoyce, and giveth comfort to sad hearts; it is the light of the understanding, and the food of the Soul, and the procurer of all happiness. Prayer appeaseth Gods Wrath, obtains pardon for our faults, overcomes our sins, delivers us from dangers, inkindles the holy fire of divine love in our hearts, and is an act of all virtues together. It is an Act of Faith, for thereby we declare our belief of God's being present, ready to hear our prayers, able and willing to grant our devout petitions. Hope also is quickned and confirm'd, for by Prayer we relie upon God, and profess our trust in his infinite mercy. And Charity likewise is increast; whilest we consider and call upon the divine incomprehensible goodness, we are inflam'd with the love of it, and other things lose their esteem with us.

2. Devotion teacheth us to fulfil all Righteousness, and to weigh things wisely in the balance of the Sanctuary. Prayer is an Act of Courage and Christian Fortitude; whilest we resolve to serve God, and be faithful to him, whatever we suffer for it. It is also an Act of Temperance; for the devout heart having a foretast of Heavenly joys, despiseth the World, and all its plea-

sures;

ſures. Prayer gives a clearer ſight of things Eternal, and manifeſts the ſecrets of Divine Wiſdom. By it the Soul approaching God, is penetrated by his light, and ſo learns the myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. By it we exerciſe our Charity whileſt we pray for others, our fear of God, whileſt we humble our ſelves at his feet, and our love and conſtancy to our Dear Redeemer, whileſt we profeſs we would die, rather than diſpleaſe or deny him. *And ſo Prayer is an abſtract of many Virtues, and he that Prays much, is much a Chriſtian.*

The End of the Firſt Part.

PRECEPTS
AND
Practical Rules
FOR
A truly Christian Life.
BEING
A Summary of Excellent Directions to follow the narrow way to BLISS.

PART II.

Written Originally in Latin

By *JOHN BONA.*

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MDCLXXVIII.

PRECEPTS AND Practical Rules FOR A truly Christian Life.

PART II.

Of the moderation of our affections, and the ſtudy and indeavour after true Virtue.

CHAP. I.

That Voluptuouſneſs and Vanity are to be avoided, and Truth ſought for in things Eternal, after Chriſt's *Example.*

1. ALL men generally commend and deſire truth, but few know where it dwells: and ſhould they know it, they would love and purſue nothing elſe. But certain it is that truth is not in things

things Earthly and periſhing, becauſe they ſoon decay into nothing, whereas truth alters not, but abides for ever. We muſt ſeek it therefore in things immortal, which have a conſtant being and remain to Eternity. Truth is to be found in Virtue, which is the Image or Tranſcript of it, and varies not according to the circumſtances of Human Life; but continues the ſame in all conditions, always above vanity, always abſolute Regent over all Paſſions and ſenſual deſires.

2. That man is acquainted with truth, whoſe mind and affections are guided by reaſon, and his reaſon by revelation, by Faith, by the Spirit of God: Whereas he that is a Caitif to his Luſts, and a Slave to his Paſſions, is altogether vain, being toſſed by continual troubles and contrary perturbations: ſometimes fears and ſometimes deſires, ſometimes anxious thoughts or perhaps vain joys; now grief for loſſes, by and by greedy purſuits after new acquiſts; grievous vexation now for being injur'd, worſe ſoon after in ſeeking for revenge. Theſe unruly paſſions are the ſprings of all our miſeries, and the off-ſpring of vanity and voluptuouſneſs, the great diſturbers of our Peace and tormentors of our unhappy Souls. Vanity begets impatient deſires of being honour'd and eſteem'd, high conceits of our ſelves, contempt of others, and a ſecret

ſecret averſion to Truth. Voluptuouſneſs inclines men to eaſe and ſports, to the Luſts of the Palat and the lower belly, to all things that can pleaſe the body and gratifie a ſenſual mind. Hence looſeneſs and diſſolution, and worldly mindedneſs; whileſt the Soul eſtranged from God purſues after outward comforts, ſeeks after Vain-glory, idle talk and idle paſtimes, and is altogether taken up with toys and vanities.

3. Theſe are the things that make the Chriſtian Laws, the Goſpel-Rules unacceptable to the World, to all carnal men; that the Goſpel injoyns nothing more than Humility, and corrupt nature inclines them to Pride; the Goſpel requires broken penitent hearts and reformation, and men abhor nothing more. So that without Faith 'tis impoſſible to find out and imbrace thoſe great and ſaving truths; *Faith is our victory over the World.* The Bleſſed Son of God to atteſt the truth of this his Heavenly Doctrine, *that we muſt take off our affections from the World*, confirm'd it by his Life and Example as well as by Miracles. For whereas men labour to be rich, he choſe to be poor; whereas they aſpire after dominion and high dignities, he fled and hid himſelf when the *Jews* would have made him King; men think it moſt grievous to bear injuries, and he patiently ſuffered the greateſt; they will not abide to be ill ſpo-

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ken of, and he was moſt falſely and unjuſtly condemn'd. His ſufferings and his converſation, were our leſſon and inſtruction: and we never ſin but when we ſeek thoſe things he deſpiſed, and flee from that which he willingly indur'd. *He doubtleſs is much abuſed and deceiv'd that thinks felicity conſiſts in what* Chriſt *taught us to deſpiſe.*

CHAP. II.

That to attain Perfection nothing muſt be neglected.

1. YOU ſhall hardly find a perfect Chriſtian, becauſe they commonly that have overcome the greater ſins, neglect the leſſer; they will not watch and offer violence to themſelves for ſmall matters (as they count it) and by degrees they approach the brink of the Precipice, and perchance afterwards get a grievous fall. Heinous and crying ſins affect us with horror at firſt ſight: but we eaſily admit of ordinary failings. None will be ſo deſperate as to caſt away all his hopes and ſpend his whole ſtock of Grace at a time: as none would be ſo mad as to ſend his whole Eſtate going

going in one day. No, men use to say, this is no great cost, this will hardly at all sink the bag: or in another case, 'tis but one glass, one bit more, that can do me no hurt: but by little and little they at last spend all, and come to poverty, or else they surfeit and are drunk: and likewise the same fate in Spiritual things attends the same neglect and unwarines. Occasions of heroick virtue and doing God extraordinary service, do seldome occur: but almost every moment we have an opportunity of doing some good; therefore we should despise nothing, because almost every thing puts it in our power to exercise some virtue and do something to please God. We should rather observe every motion of our heart, and mind to rectifie the least irregularity of our affections, and take all occasions to mortifie pernicious self-will and self-love. *No man of a sudden grows wicked, but he that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little.* Eccl. 19. 1.

2. Every human comfort, though never so innocent, yet in some manner excludes the divine: but he that can pass by all outward things, and entertain himself with *Christ*, chuse him for his onely portion, who alone is all-sufficient, his joys shall be solid and lasting. As Philosophers say that whensoever you take one body, another succeeds in its place, lest there should be a *vacuum*

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in nature: So, and much more certain it is, that when the ſoul empties it ſelf of all affection to creatures, it is ſoon repleniſh'd with God, and all divine conſolations. But alaſs, 'tis to be confeſt that we having uſed our ſelves from our infancy to delight in material things, which are preſent and perceived by ſenſe: we afterwards grow very unapt to entertain and pleaſe our ſelves with objects Spiritual and Supernatural, which are far out of ſight and can be apprehended but by Faith only. Hence it is that we lie groveling on the ground, and attend to nothing but the dictates of fleſh and bloud, and remain inconſtant and unable to raiſe up our ſelves above our depreſſed nature: until having ſhook off the vain comforts of tranſitory things, *we turn our ſelves to God and ſettle our reſt in him, who is our peace and our joy, and the end and center of all things.*

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

That Self-denyal and the Croſs is abſolutely neceſſary to all Chriſtians.

1. THE Life of every Chriſtian ſhould be a perpetual Self-crucifixion, yet the deliciouſneſs of the Croſs is underſtood but of very few, ſuch as have been intimately acquainted with it. They only know that have tryed, how much pleaſure follows contrition and ſelf-abnegation, inſomuch that they find it moſt bitter when they any ways depart from their humble penitent temper, to return to the life of ſenſe. The World indeed counts them unhappy, becauſe commonly they are poor, afflicted and deſpiſed: but they rejoyce in their tribulations, and find themſelves happy, being well pleaſed with what happens to them, becauſe they deſire moſt of all, that God's will may be done in all things. Is it his pleaſure to make Poverty their lot? they freely accept of it. Will he have them afflicted? they ſubmit. Are they to be ſcorn'd and diſgrac'd? they are not unwilling; come what will they like it; therefore they are moſt happy that have all things at will. As for the

the wicked that ſeek after the pleaſures of ſin, though they have what they wiſh, and appear proſperous to envy and admiration: yet they really are unhappy, becauſe they wiſh what they ſhould not, what is unjuſt and diſhoneſt, and will bring ſorrow at laſt.

2. The Croſs is the Center of our holy Religion, the moſt myſterious and profitable doctrine of it, both for belief and practice; he that ſeeks not for the Croſs when he becomes a Chriſtian, underſtands not as yet what the Goſpel deſigns. *Chriſt* at firſt conceal'd many things from his Diſciples, becauſe they could not hear them: yet weak and ignorant as they were, he acquainted them with the ſcandal of his Croſs and ignominious paſſion. St. *Paul* likewiſe to the new Converts would give milk and not meat, yet notwithſtanding would preach to them *Jeſus Chriſt* Crucified, to the *Jews* an offence, and to the *Gentiles* fooliſhneſs; nay, he himſelf with all his learning, profeſt that he did not care to know any thing, ſave *Jeſus Chriſt* and him crucified. And the Primitive Church, for ſome time conceal'd many things from the Catechumens, and yet never the Croſs of *Chriſt*. Nay every Chriſtian is, and was of old ſigned in his forehead with the ſign of the Croſs, in token he ſhould not be aſhamed of *Chriſt* crucified: *And God forbid we ſhould*

glory

glory in any thing save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who is made unto us, wisdome, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*

3. As he hath redeemed us by the Cross, so none can receive the benefit of his Redemption, but by bearing the Cross. Hence the absolute necessity of patience and self-denyal, so that whoever doth not renounce himself cannot be *Christ*'s Disciple. *If any one* (saith he) *will come after me, let him take up his Cross and follow me: and if he doth not hate* (that is, be ready to forsake) *father and mother, wife and children, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple: for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* Mat. 16. 25. He doth not only say that a Christian must deny pride, intemperance, luxury, injustice, pomps and riches, and such things that are without us, but himself; he must deny himself, that is, his natural desires and affections, his own will, the suggestions of his own carnal mind. These he must oppose and mortifie, and overcome; *Crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts*; and make his life an image and representation of the Crucifixion of *Christ*. *These things are hard to flesh and bloud, but in them consists our Faith and our Salvation.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

That Self-denyal is the Character, and the principal duty of a Christian.

1. IN the Spiritual building Self-denyal is the first Stone; for what will raptures and high-flown thoughts signifie, what will avail communions and familiar acquaintances with God, and what the preciselt virtue, if in all these we seek our selves, aim at our own glory, and puft up with Pharisaical pride do despise others? He is wiser than all the Philosophers, who in his heart owns himself simple and ignorant; he is higher than the greatest Monarchs, who reputes himself the meanest of men. Our virtue, perfection and safety consist not in lofty expressions, nor yet in things wonderful and extraordinary; but in the Cross, in bearing reproaches, in self-abjection: and no man can obtain here true vertue and sanctification, and hereafter glory, except, renouncing his own desires, he prepare himself to suffer, and be made conformable to *Christ* Crucified. Yet we must observe that as *Simon* the *Cyrenian* did bear the Cross of *Christ* and yet not die with him: so

ſo many bear a heavy Croſs without true mortification; in what they ſuffer they have ſome other deſign, than to glorifie God and to ſubmit to his bleſſed will.

2. Who would think that ſelf-love ſhould be found in the Croſs, which it abhors ſo much? Yet ſo it is; not a few there are, who willingly or otherways, can indure much, that they may boaſt of it, that they may be ſeen and praiſed by men. Such men indeed do bear the Croſs, but they will not be crucified with *Chriſt*; they deny and afflict themſelves, but becauſe they will not truſt God for their reward, they have none at all, they loſe their labour and themſelves. Many others there be that complain, that their affairs and neceſſary employments abroad, keep them from minding what is good, by depriving them of their inward peace: but the things that diſturb the tranquillity of the Soul, are from within, becauſe we will not break with our ſelves, becauſe we are too ſenſual and too much ſeek our eaſe and advantage. From hence proceeds that inward and vexatious war betwixt the Spirit and the Fleſh, which can never ceaſe till Reaſon and Religion reign in us, and the inferior appetites be brought to obedience and perfect ſubjection, to the higher rational faculties.

3. If a man had a friend ſo dear and intimate, that he could not eat, nor reſt, nor

live one day without him, and a faithful and creditable Monitor should tell him that his pretended friend is false and treacherous, and designs to ruin and to murther him; would not his love presently cease, and be turned to hatred and thoughts of revenge? Christian Reader, such a friend is our flesh; we gratifie and indulge it, and use it with the greatest kindness: and at the same time, under pretence of friendship it deceives us, and designs to deprive us of immortal life, and to bring to Eternal death. Yet this false friend sleeps in our bosome; we are not to war with strangers and with far distant Enemies: but with one that dwells with us at home, and accompanies us wherever we go, and always lies in wait to take advantage of us, and do us mischief. *Let a man forsake himself and come out of himself, and then he will find no obstacles in his way to Heaven.*

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

How we must fight our corrupt nature and depraved affections.

1. WE must be very careful to observe what is the object of our love or fear, and what of our joy or sorrow; for these four affections have the absolute power of our heart: and God by them is the master of it, when we love and fear nothing but him and for him, and when he is the cause and the measure of our joy or sorrow. When these motions of our mind are disorderly and tend where they should not, we become unruly like beasts: but when they are ordered and directed right, then they are highly serviceable and they make us holy and happy like Angels. For in this consisteth the perfection and happiness of man, to have his affections and desires guided by truth and reason; for then his love and his joys become instruments of bliss and virtue: whereas the same affections, when guided by corrupt nature alone, become pernicious and vexatious, degenerate into wild lusts, monsters which we must always fight, and with our utmost strength indeavor to conquer.

2. But to this purpose, it will not suffice that we in general indeavour to reform and keep under our appetites and unruly passions; for corrupt nature is well enough pleased with all the apparel and formalities of mortification, self-denyal, and victory over sinful passions; and Philosophers grow in love with the fair Ideas of virtue, in this pompous attire: and many in this have deceiv'd themselves, and boasted of conquest over their evil inclinations, because they find not in themselves an aversion to vertue and good desires. But when it comes to tryal indeed, and they are no longer to fight with the notion of sin in general, but with a present urging lust, with a pressing uneasiness and necessity, with some provocations to anger or to impatience: then it appears how vain, how weak and insignificant, were their great thoughts and fine resolutions. Better it is therefore carefully attend to every particular occasion of vanquishing our selves and restraining our depraved appetites, and to do it seriously and to purpose; for so by degrees we shall rectifie and amend every defect, and bring all our passions and desires under the power of right reason, or Christian Religion.

3. But this is not to be done without an ever-watching diligence, an unwearied patience, a great application, and a persevering courage and labour: that by offering

ing a perpetual violence to our evil propensities, as they shew themselves, we may go to the root of them; and quite pull them up. For now in our state of depravation, every holy affection and the lifting up of our Soul to God, is violent, being against nature, against the bent of our sensual appetites: so that we must renew our indeavours and add new vigor to them every moment, else we fall down, and nature easily prevails, and we soon return to our selves.

4. As weeds in gardens may be pull'd up, and yet not hindred from growing again of themselves: so by care and by keeping a strict hand over our vicious affections, we may so keep them under, that we shall think they are quite destroy'd: but do what we can, the ground of our corrupt nature, will always be apt to produce ill weeds, and sin of it self will be growing again; so that we must never give over fighting, never cease to mortifie and purifie our selves whilst we live. And yet, if by God's assistance we can once do some one noble act of Christian vertue, report one noted victory over our selves: that alone may be sufficient to assert and enlarge our liberty, and obtain us grace, whereby we shall afterwards easily overcome all our aversions to vertue. Some holy men have been so encouraged and strengthned by one

great and difficult triumph, that afterwards without fear and with little trouble or danger, they have overcome all enemies and oppoſitions. *So great a thing it is to fight with fortitude, and maintain once a noble contention, till we have conquer'd.*

CHAP. VI.

Of the right uſe and moderation of our outward Senſes.

1. BEcauſe the eyes commonly are an inlet to ſin, we ought to turn them from tempting objects with the ſame care and quickneſs as a man would remove out of a houſe infected with the Plague. Now human eyes wherewith created things are beheld, may be ſaid to be of three ſorts. The firſt altogether Senſual or natural, when viewing the outward beauty of an object, we are pleaſed with it, and conſider no farther. The ſecond may be call'd Rational or Philoſophical, when we making reflections upon the ſymmetry and other properties of things viſible, are moved thereby to ſearch and to know the nature of them. And the third we may ſay, are Chriſtian or Religious, when by the beholding of creatures,

creatures, we raise up our Souls to the love and contemplation of the Creator. With these eyes pious Souls viewing the beauties of the universe are led to the consideration of its glorious maker, who is the fountain of all beauty and perfection, as the author of all subsistence and being.

2. Now as the life of the body depends upon its union with the Soul, so doth in some manner the life of our senses depend on the presence of their proper objects; as things visible to the eyes, audible voices to the ears. The pleasure which those senses receive from a beautiful sight, or a sweet harmony, may be called their life: and their death or mortification, in proportion to this, is their being deprived of those objects, whereon they act with delight; which deprivation is very useful, if not altogether requisite, to arrive to a state of vertue and sanctification. For nothing is more destructive of a Christian Life, than a life of sense: the imagination being as it were in the middle betwixt the soul and the senses, when these work upon her, as they are moved by outward objects, she likewise works upon the soul, and draws it to assent to the voluptuousness of lower faculties: and this is not to be avoided without we bar our senses, by a strict restraint, from those things which affect them with sinful delights.

3. In this consists the death of sense, which is to be considered as twofold; the first Natural, when there is such a real separation betwixt sense and its object, that they cannot possibly meet: The second Moral, when sense perceives but enjoys not its object, being restrain'd from the pleasure of it. The first, some judge to be less difficult and more safe: it being easier to avoid all occasions of sinful pleasure, than to keep a due moderation when we ingage in them: but in this discretion and due measures are to be observ'd. The second is accordingly thought to be more dangerous, because sensual pleasures are very inticing and insinuating, and are known by sad experience to have a great prevalency over the Soul and nobler affections.

4. And then farther, it is to be consider'd, that we suckt the poyson of voluptuousness together with our milk; from our very infancy we learn'd to indulge sense: and though we have often experimented that its delights and satisfactions are short, and vain, and unsatisfying, and withal pernicious and highly afflictive to the Soul: yet still we have the same notions of them, they stick close to our mind: and those pleasing though false apprehensions which first entred our hearts, will not be rectified, nor be gone, till we have a long time, used serious reflections and considerations, till by

by many acts of self-denyal and contrary virtue we have imprinted in our minds the true principles of Christianity. *God is a Spirit, and a spiritual life is the way to him; to chastize and restrain the fancy, to keep under the body, and be guided by divine precepts, is the way to spiritualize our selves and to come to God.*

CHAP. VII.

Of denying our Sensual appetites, especially Intemperance.

1. IT is no difficult matter for a man who truly loves and fears God, and studies to please him, to despise and forsake all worldly pleasures, pomps and vanities: but to abstain from all food is not to be done, for by it our bodies are rescued from death, and the necessity of it returns upon us daily. But because there is something of delight in the satisfying of this need, there is danger also lest luxury mingle with it, and pleasure which may follow after, be the leading cause to our refection: therefore though we cannot wholly forbear eating and drinking, yet we must take great heed of the voluptuousness of it, that necessity be

not the pretence, and pleaſure the deſign of eating. Nature is ſatisfied with a little, but greedineſs or daintineſs are always craving: and ſometimes we know not whether want or wantonneſs call for food, and we are glad and willing to miſtake, that we may have an occaſion to gratifie the unruly appetite. In theſe we muſt daily watch our ſelves, becauſe theſe temptations do daily return: and we muſt diet our ſelves with ſuch moderation, that we may nouriſh our bodies, and not feed our luſts. *Plain, abſtemious and frugal food is the health of Soul and Body: and he that pampers not his fleſh, by the quality or quantity of his meat and drink, may eaſily maſter all carnal deſires.*

2. To ſeek after feaſts and dainties, and to make them the matter of our diſcourſe and our meditation, is the part of an Epicure, of one whoſe God is his belly, and who minds earthly things: but a Chriſtian ſhould be indeed, and alſo live as a penitent; preſſing neceſſity ſhould bring him to his table, and thither he ſhould come as if bread and water were his onely allowance; that whatever is ſuperadded may reliſh better, and he may be more content and thankful, and alſo moderate. This we might eaſily do, if we would duly conſider how abſtemious primitive Chriſtians were, how much our bleſſed Lord faſted, and how for us he taſted vinegar and gall. This if we

we would often call to mind, and seriously set our selves to the imitation of their Blessed examples, our conversation would be in Heaven, and our thoughts would be far enough from dwelling in caves and kitchins. As for the other fleshly lusts which also war against the Soul; all occasions to them are to be avoided, and idleness also; a strict watch over our senses must be kept; the rules of a severe modesty must be observed; and especially we must shun all frequent and familiar converse with the other Sex: for this without our knowledge and against our will, kindles a dangerous and secret fire. And lastly we must take great heed that we be not confident of our selves: *for in such a slippery way, he is in some manner already fallen, that fears not to fall.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Talkativeneſs and Silence.

1. THE Evils of the tongue are paſt number, therefore ſaith the wiſe man, *Prov.* 10. 19. *In the multitude of words there wanteth not ſin, but he that reſtraineth his lips is wiſe.* Indeed talkativeneſs is a fountain and a torrent of iniquity. It is a mark of ignorance, it betrays much folly, and is a great enemy to ſerious thoughts and recollection. Mens words for the moſt part proceed from ſomething of Pride, for they commonly ſpeak to teach others and to ſhew their own wiſdom and great parts. Every one thinks he knows much, and to make it appear and be thought ſomebody he commonly outs with more than he knows. As bad air drawn in, doth in time affect, infect the body: ſo doth the breath of many words much prejudice the Soul. It diſſolves the ſpirit, and breeds quarrels and contentions, and utters lies and detractions, and brings forth looſe unſeemly jeſting and jeering, and evils of all ſorts. In vain doth he indeavour to be devout and to have peace within, who doth not

not refrain his tongue and set a watch before his lips. In vain doth he endeavour to amend himself, that censures and speaks ill of others. This is a snare wherein many are caught, to be indulgent to themselves and severe to others, to boast and magnifie what is theirs, and slight as much what relates to others. Few there are that wholly renounce to this vice; few that lead so uncorrupt a life, as not willingly to tax others corruptions. The propensity to this sin is so great, that many counted good Christians, who have overcome divers temptations, and mortified their other lusts: yet fall here, and cannot bridle their unruly tongue, the last gin the Devil sets to catch Souls: and it hath been observ'd by men of great piety and great experience, that a great talker was never very good, or never persever'd to be so.

2. Silence therefore which sequesters us from mens vain converse, that we may entertain our selves with God; silence which sanctifies all our persecutions, sorrows and infirmities, must needs be highly advantageous to every one that makes a right use of it. For when in any case we suffer wrongfully, and yet hold our tongues, we then offer to God our Souls and Bodies, goods and good names, as a sacrifice: we follow the example of *Christ*, who opened not his mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter:

ter: and we poſſeſs our Souls with patience, and free our ſelves from clamours and perturbations. Sometimes indeed a juſt defence of our ſelves may be requiſite: but we muſt be very cautious that we exceed not the due bounds of Chriſtian meekneſs and humility. And yet this can happen but ſeldome; as when we are called to anſwer, by the Magiſtrate; when the ſlander would make us uncapable of exerciſing, or uſeleſs in the exerciſe of a publick office; or when it would be others detriment; in theſe caſes we may ſpeak with truth and meekneſs: in others we had beſt hold our tongue. And that it may be to purpoſe, we muſt alſo refrain and quell our inward paſſions: that the tumult within make not the outward peace inſignificant. *I kept ſilence even from good words*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt: if from good words ſometimes we muſt refrain, much more always from vain and ill language. *He is a wiſe man that can hold his tongue, for 'tis leſs difficult to know how to ſpeak well, than how to be ſilent.*

CHA

CHAP. IX.

Of true and false delights, and of self-complacency in virtue.

1. VIrtue alone is the true and lasting pleasure of rational creatures; other things are pleasant but in appearance, and for a short uncertain time, and according to mens various opinions: for worldly pleasures proceed not from reason, which is constant and common to all, but from corrupt appetites which always do change and differ. As a sick Palat cannot rightly discern of the relish of meats, no more can a vicious man feel and understand what is true pleasure, which proceeds only from virtue, to which he is too much a stranger. Sensible delights indeed by natures instinct, are pleasing to all, and few justly know how to use, and when to refuse them. But man was created to a nobler end, than only to gratifie sense: he was made for the sight and the fruition of God, the last and sovereign good. 'Tis true indeed we cannot contemplate truth and spiritual things, but by the help of those Ideas and representations which we have from sense,

ſenſe, and our rational faculties cannot well diſcharge their function, when the organs of the body are diſcompoſed: and therefore we muſt have ſuch care of our bodies, as may render them fit inſtruments for our ſouls, and preſerve them ſo.

2. But we ſin grievouſly and pervert the order which God and nature have appointed, if we make bodily pleaſure the end of our natural actions: whereas we ſhould deſign them, and make them ſubſervient to thoſe nobler offices for which we were created after God's Image. I confeſs we cannot long ſubſiſt without ſome pleaſure, corporal or ſpiritual: and we cannot divide our Souls equally betwixt both: but then this obligeth us to aſpire the more after heavenly joys, and to delight our ſelves ſo much the more in God, in the ſenſe of his favour and the hope of his glory, that we may deſpiſe and diſreliſh the pleaſures of ſenſe and vanity.

3. But let it be obſerv'd alſo, that ſome love vertue more for its glory, than its goodneſs ſake; they aſpire after God, becauſe it is a thing high and tranſcendent; they live a ſtrict and ſevere life, becauſe it denotes a brave and generous ſpirit; they preſerve inward peace, becauſe it is pleaſant; they inquire after the way to Heaven, and to that purpoſe conſult many Books, that they may enlarge their knowledge

ledge and satisfie their curiosity; and they walk in the narrow way to perfection, that they may delight in themselves, and admire their own excellencies. All this these men do for to please and magnifie themselves; when they think most of all to serve God, they only serve to their own pride; and when at last they shall expect great rewards, they shall find their hands empty of good works; and their hearts full of nothing but Self-love. God is therefore to be sought with humility, with singleness of heart and a sincere Spirit; he is to be lov'd above all things, and for his own sake. *This life is the valley of the shadow of death, a state of warfare, a place of perpetual labour: rest and peace, and joys eternal are reserv'd for a better life.*

CHAP. X.

That we are led too much by Opinion.

1. THat we generally live by opinion, is known and acknowledg'd, but how great is the force and the prevalency of it, is not perhaps so well understood. Opinion in many cases and after a strange way, doth exercise a great power, or rather tyranny over

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over men. It makes them as it pleaſeth healthy or ſickly, poor or rich, miſerable or happy: for no man is either of theſe but as he thinks himſelf. Opinion brings joy or ſorrow, not ſo much according to the reality of good and evil, as according to the fancy: for experience tells us that what we wiſh'd or fear'd was nothing ſo pleaſant or grievous as we imagined. More than that, Opinion not only gives a kind of preſent being to things that are future: but alſo unites together things that are far diſtant, and makes us feel in one moment the goods or evils of many years to come, and which perhaps ſhall never be. Opinion alone for the moſt part, brings credit and praiſe to men and their actions: and if all the dignities and the riches of the world were united together, they could not content one ſingle man, except his opinion were alſo ſatisfied. *Hamans* wealth was exceeding great, and he was firſt in the Court of King *Ahaſuerus*, and yet he thought himſelf the unhappieſt of men, becauſe *Mordecai* a poor Captive, would not ſtand up and honour him, when he came into the Palace.

2. Another great miſchief of opinion is this, that it lengthens the preſent time, and makes its duration in ſome manner interminable; as if our life and worldly enjoyments were to have no end: and that contrariwiſe it contracts Eternity, and leſſens to almoſt

almost nothing those incomprehensible, amazing, everlasting ages that follow this uncertain life. Men also commonly take an account of moral good and evil by the measures of opinion: and whilst they seek to avoid one extreme, they too often fall into another. As some from a dull lazy life, become too restless and busie; from prodigality many fall to covetousness; and from superstition to profaneness and irreverence. The last cheat of Opinion I shall now reckon, is that it generally makes us judge and esteem our selves, not according to our own sense and consciousness, but according to the vain thoughts and talk of other men. We defer so much, not only to our own, but also to others opinions, that except they will count us happy, we cannot be so. We are not contented to live to our selves, but we must also entertain a troublesome imaginary life to please we know not whom; people that perhaps know us not, and to be sure, care not for us; whose judgment we onr selves slight in other things. Thus neglecting that true and real life which we our selves enjoy, we make it our care and indeavour to preserve and adorn that life which depends on others, and hath no subsistence but in ours, and other mens fancy: and so far doth this delusion prevail that what we our selves feel and know, is nothing to us, except others be acquainted

acquainted with it. From all theſe miſchievous errors and deceptions of opinion, we cannot be freed by the power of natural reaſon, without the ſupernatural light of the Divine Grace enlighten our minds: *For our opinions become true or falſe according as is the light that guides us.*

CHAP. XI.

That the Doctrine of Salvation is much ſlighted, even by ſome that pretend to it.

1. ALL knowledge is good that agrees with truth, but he that would work out his ſalvation with fear and trembling, had need learn firſt what concerns it, becauſe our time is ſhort, and great learning in other things is great trouble and great vanity. It is the ſaying of S. *James*, that *to him that knows to do good and doth it not, to him it is ſin:* 4. 17. As if he ſhould ſay that it is ill to eat and not digeſt. For as indigeſted meat nouriſheth not, but rather hurts: ſo much knowledge not concocted and converted to uſe by the fire of holy charity, fills men with pride and ſuch peccant

peccant humors, and at last ends in death. These two things men are to care for whilst they are in this World, first to keep the life of the Soul, which consists in the grace and the favour of God: and secondly to preserve their temporal life: but for the first, many are unconcern'd; let what will become of the Soul, their study and all their labour is that it may be well with the body. And so they run blindfold after their lusts and sensual enjoyments: being wise indeed, as children of this world, but having none of that wisdom which makes men wise unto Salvation.

2. They that speak doubtfully and deceitfully are odious to men (saith the Son of *Sirach*,) much more are they odious to God, that live so; whose very life is a lie, as well as their words. They pretend to know God and his holy ways, and vainly boast to follow them, when yet they go quite contrary; they reprove and tutor others, not themselves; they cunningly dissemble their vices, and make a shew of those virtues they are strangers to. But they cannot deceive God who searcheth the heart, and their hypocrisie cannot be hid from him, who seeth the things that are in secret, and at the last day will bring all to light. And O that men would view their stains and imperfections, in the great and eternal light of that terrible day, for then

then they could easily discern, and as easily cleanse and amend them. We have but these two ways to take notice of our defects and deformities, either in the light of our own reason, comparing them to our selves; or in the light of Divine Revelation, bringing them forth before the bright and glorious presence of the most holy God. The first is like a winter days light, dim and cold: but the second is the sun-shine of a summer-day, so clear as to make the least mote visible, and hot enough to burn and consume all our dross. *But to see this saving divine light, a man must come out of himself and go to God, in whom alone is truth and wisdome, and out of whom all things are meer impostures and follies.*

CHAP. XII.

That Self-will is a great Evil and must be renounc'd.

1. ALL our actions contrary to God's will, and in compliance to our own, are the fewel for that fire which is unquenchable. For self-will may be said to be the maker of Hell and the leader to it, the Author of all the evils which eternally afflict

afflict all the wicked that rebell'd against God. As likewise even in time, the less a man follows his own will, the farther he is from being miserable, the nearer he comes to true happiness. And he that hath wholly renounc'd to his own desires and inclinations, hath the greatest assurance that can be had here, of being eternally happy hereafter. How this is to be done, our Blessed Saviour taught us when he said *follow me:* for he himself, as he testified came not into the world to do his own will, but the will of the Father that sent him: so that to follow him, we must follow his obedience, forsake our own will to comply with his; to follow him we must take up and bear his yoke and his Cross, which to the flesh is indeed hard and afflictive, but to the Spirit is comfortable and delicious.

2. This our Christian profession doth require from us, that in all our works and undertakings, we may heartily say, *Not my will, but Gods will be done:* This also is the design of the supreme eternal will of God, in creating and preserving mens wills, that they may freely serve him, and in all things fulfil his good pleasure. And truly it is the greatest and most blessed freedom, to be in subjection to God, to be able from our hearts to say in all events, *Even so Father, for so it hath seemed good before thee.* My only will is, Gods will may be done. He is infinitely

finitely good and wiſe, I freely reſign my ſelf to him, and deſire evermore to have an entire dependence on him, and to be contented with all the diſpoſals of his Providence, and that in all things his bleſſed name may be glorified. *All mens troubles and vexations proceed from their unwillingneſs to ſubmit to God, for there is not a greater pain or grief than to be what we would not be.*

CHAP. XIII.

Of the advantages of Solitarineſs and Retirement.

1. TO be much alone in quiet ſilence, and there to examine and inſtruct ones ſelf, is the way to have our ſenſes and our thoughts well compos'd. Therefore a wiſe man hates much talk and much company, keeps his eyes cloſe to curioſities, and his ears to flying reports, and cumbers not himſelf with too much of the world: remembring the ſaying of wiſe *Ben-Sirach*, that he ſhall become wiſe that hath little buſineſs, (*Eccluſ.* 38. 24.) God is but one, and he can beſt commune with God that dwells by himſelf. And if a wiſe man be called forth to ſome outward employment,

imployment, by neceſſity or by Gods glory: yet his thoughts will always tend homeward, to dwell in peace with the inner man, in an humble and quiet heart, wherein there is always a ſenſe of Gods gracious preſence. Whereas he that is too intent and buſie about the circumference of unſettled creatures, ſhall not be able to come to his proper reſt and center, which is God.

2. To the ignorant fooliſh World it is very grievous to be alone and converſe with themſelves but for a few hours: they are afraid of themſelves, and they make it their chiefeſt care to be ingag'd abroad, and to avoid their own company. They ſpend much of their time upon the neceſſities of this preſent life, and yet what remains of it, lies upon them like a heavy burthen, and they are glad to find out occaſions to throw it away. They dread to look within, and to hear the voice of their own conſcience: and finding nothing in themſelves but fearful apprehenſions, vexation and tediouſneſs of ſpirit, they range abroad, and go for comfort to other creatures. Serious thoughts are a terror to them, and conſideration is as bad as death: becauſe their Soul lies naked and deformed, loaded with ſins and miſeries, and they have juſt cauſe to avoid the ſight of ſuch a Spectacle. No wonder therefore, if but a

few men love to be private and to be ſequeſtred from the World, when ſo many deſire to be in a croud and a perpetual hurry, and eſteem themſelves unhappy when they muſt be alone: as indeed unhappy they are and muſt be, until they rectifie many things, and learn to converſe and live with themſelves, and by inward purity invite God to dwell in their hearts, that there they may reſt in him. *We are told that many are called and but a few choſen, that we might learn to forſake the many and live with the few, and with fear and diligent care, make our Calling and Election ſure.*

CHAP. XIV.

Of the Danger of Riches, and that the deſire of them is to be mortified.

1. HOW apt Riches are to corrupt a good Life, how pernicious is the love of them, our Bleſſed Saviour taught his Diſciples, when he affirm'd with an aſſeveration, as being a thing of great moment, and much to be noted, *Verily I ſay unto you, that a Rich man ſhall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 19.23. And

And that this terrible sentence might make the deeper impression upon their hearts, he exemplifies Rich mens danger by this Parable; *It is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a Rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* The Door of the Heavenly Kingdom is narrow and can give no entrance to such as are loaded and cumbred with fardels of Wealth. We should therefore love and desire Riches, as a sick man doth a bitter Potion; it is necessary to recover health but it is unpleasant, and if he could be well without it, he would let it alone, and however he takes no more than needs must: so should every Christian be affected to the things of the World; they are the staff of our Pilgrimage, and our necessities require the use of them: but yet they are vexatious and dangerous too, and therefore we may wish we could live without them, and we must take no more of them than is requisite to supply our wants; for as the Apostle saith, 1 Tim. 6. 6. *Godliness with Contentment is great gain.* And 'twas the Counsel of a good man, *Fear not my Son, though we are made Poor, for thou hast much wealth if thou fear God, and depart from all Sin.* Tob. 4. 21.

2. He is truly Rich, that is Rich to Eternity, and hath a Treasure of Good Works in store. But they can hardly be Innocent,

that will be Rich in the World; for the love of Riches is the Root of all Evil. Men care not what ſins they commit ſo they may get Wealth, and when they have it, its great uſe is to purchaſe therewith the ſatisfaction of their Luſts; the Luſt of the Eyes, the Luſt of the Fleſh, and the Pride of Life, which are the Idols of the World. But as ſome that play with pibbles and pins, are very intent to their game, when yet they value not the inſtruments of it: ſo ſhould we care for our neceſſities, and yet not ſet our hearts upon thoſe things that ſupply them; we may uſe money to that end, but we may not inſlave our affections to it, except we will become moſt baſe and miſerable. We ſee when Nuts are thrown among Children, they will greedily ſcrape and fight for them, and Men will ſtand unconcern'd and deſpiſe ſuch traſh: ſo ſhould we, as many as fear God and are true Chriſtians; when Riches and Honours are to be got, and men that know and expect no better, will croud and ſtrive and ſweat for them, let us laugh and pitty their folly, thoſe things are but Nuts, not worth our ſtooping; if any fall into our boſome, we may break it and eat it, but 'tis below us to ſcramble for them; all Worldly things are meer deceit and vanity. When the Son of God became Man, he would have no Riches, to teach us how much we

ſhould

ſhould deſpiſe them. The Children o this World like not of this, they rather deſpiſe Chriſt and his Divine Doctrine, becauſe they love and eſteem Mammon: but the Children of light gather their Treaſure in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt corrupteth, and where thieves cannot break through nor ſteal. *He is Rich enough in this World, that wants not Daily Bread.*

CHAP. XV.

Of the Uſe of Riches, and how to know we Love them not.

1. FEW underſtand or conſider how to uſe their Eſtates aright; that they are the proviſion for this preſent ſhort Life which a good man obtains without any wrong to others; and owns without Pride or Covetouſneſs, and preſerves without anxious fears, and diſtributes without regret or nigardlineſs, where Charity and Neceſſity call. Now the meaſures of Neceſſity are to be taken from the Man's ſtate and condition. For ſome by birth or by place, are Noble and dignified Perſons, who in reſpect of their ranks, which ſhould

be Honourably maintain'd, have greater wants than their inferiors, who may have ſufficient with a leſſer Portion. Yet however, we are all but Stewards of what we poſſeſs, and we ſhould all ſtudy Alms and Moderation, that God our great Land-lord may find us faithful. For he is the true owner of all that we have, we are but Servants under him, who ſhould uſe all for his glory, and in the midſt of our plenty be voluntarily Poor as to our ſelves: *And when Riches increaſe ſhould not be proud nor ſet our heart upon them.*

2. Nature hath hid Gold and Silver in the bowels of the Earth, and the Covetous that ſeeks for thoſe beloved mettals, is bowed down and ſtoops to the ground, and can hardly raiſe up himſelf to look to Heaven: but the wiſer Chriſtian looks upon all inferior things as periſhing and ſoon ended, and therefore ſets his affections on the Riches above, which are true and everlaſting. There he ſeeks for Honour, where 'tis given to none that are unworthy of it; he expects that Kingdom which being obtain'd, expells all fears and all dangers; all his poſſeſſions here, he offers to God with himſelf: being ready freely to be in want, if Providence ſhall pleaſe.

3. Now by theſe tokens it will appear that our hearts are free from Covetouſneſs and the love of Mammon: If we are perſwaded

swaded that they are a cumbrance and a heavy burthen; if we slight them, and are very well pleased to be without them; if when we have them we are not puft up with Pride and Vain-Glory; and if we look upon fine Houses, and rich Furnitures and such things, as the vain Monuments of Mens Vanities, and the great obstacles to their Salvation. Happy are they that are free from the love and desire of those things, they shall live in peace and safety, and trouble and fear shall not be able to take hold of them. As 'tis better to sleep well in a mean narrow Couch, than to be sick and restless in a stately Bed: so is it much better to be content and quiet with a little, than to have much, and therewith much of vexation. *He that is content, is Rich and Happy.*

CHAP. XVI.

Of Poverty in Spirit, and the contempt of the World.

1. OUR Blessed Saviour hath assign'd the Kingdom of Heaven to them that are Poor in Spirit, Mat. 5. 3. *Blessed are the Poor in Spirit, for theirs is the King-*

dom of Heaven. Such are they that neither desire to be Rich, nor place their Peace and Contentment in Riches; whose wishes and possessions can never fail nor be taken from them; who are more afraid of having their good things in this Life, than others are of being Poor; and whose Heart raised above all created things can truly speak in this manner. I am Rich, praised be God, and have more than sufficient for my needs, and more than I desire: and my affections cleave not to what I have; I have the use but not the trouble of it, for I can freely part with it, without pain or regret. I am truly inricht with the possession of that Divine Truth which is from above, in it all things are contain'd, and it is all-sufficient of it self; for in it I perceive that I have right to nothing, that I am nothing, and that I can do nothing of my self. That Blessed Truth tells me that I must not place my Contentment in Earthly Transitory things, which like shadows will soon pass away and would deceive me: and that nothing can happen to me, but by that Gracious Providence of my Heavenly Father, which brought me naked from my Mothers Womb, and naked will bring me to the Dust again. *This is the Wisdom of the Just, infused from above: theirs only is the Kingdom of Heaven, for they only despise this Earth.*

2. Would to God Christians were thus wise

wise and did well understand this Truth; for then none of them would seek after the perishing Riches of this World, and none would love them: but as few are chosen, few are Wise, and but few Poor in Spirit. *Blessed is the Rich that is found without Blemish, and that is not gone after Gold*; (saith the Son of *Sirach*) *Who is he? and we will call him Blessed, for wonderful things hath he done among his People.* Ecclus. 31. 8. For indeed you shall hardly find one man that can possess the things of this World, as not being his own, and that can be Rich and Content under Poverty. Few they are that come to this Perfection, because men love the Vanities and Conveniencies of this Life, which are purchast with Riches: and few they are that regard the Precepts of *Christ*, Mat. 6. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and its Righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.* And, *Be Content with your Food and Raiment and be not solicitous for it, for your Heavenly Father knows that you want those things.* Why then don't we believe our loving Saviour, and trust the Providence of our Heavenly Father? because we suffer our desires to run over the World, and we consider not that the way to Heaven is streight and narrow: and because we give ear to our Lusts, and will not hearken to the Truth, nor be guided by it. The broad way is for them, that carry the

World before them, or at leaſt carry it in their hearts: but the narrow way is for the naked, ſuch whoſe Spirit is free from the cumberſome Riches of the World. *what will the falſe Mammon avail, if we are deſtitute of the true Riches? We are Strangers and Pilgrims travelling homeward through a ſtreight and difficult way, and great loads can be but great hindrances.*

CHAP. XVII.

Of the Neceſſity and the Meaſures of Alms-giving.

1. SUch Riches as are not imploy'd in a moderate ſupply of our neceſſities, according to our quality, may not be kept nigardly, nor ſpent profuſely upon Pride or Luxury: but they belong to the Poor, they muſt be ſpent in Good Works and Pious uſes, for the advancement of God's Glory, and the benefit of mens Souls and Bodies; and he much indangers his Salvation that doth not diſpoſe of them on this wiſe. Money kept in bags is but droſs, its worth conſiſts in the uſe of it: and if it ſerves not for the relief of the neceſſitous,

and

and the gathering Treasures in Heaven, then it becomes mischievous, and the guilt of it doth exceed its weight. Lands, Moneys, and other moveables are generally called Goods, not that they make a man good of themselves, but because the owner may do good with them, and thereby make himself better and happier: as it is written, Psal. 112. 9. *He hath dispersed, he hath given to the Poor, his Righteousness endureth for ever.* For, *The ransom of a Man's Life are his Riches,* (saith *Solomon*) Prov. 13. 8. And *as water will quench a flaming fire, so Alms make an attonement for Sin* (saith the wise *Ben-Sirach*) Ecclus. 3. 30. Nothing suits better with our Christian Profession than to pitty and help the afflicted, remembring and relieving the infirmities of our common Nature in the afflictions of others: and nothing is more unnatural and Anti-Christian, than to refuse comfort and assistance to others, or even to our selves in our wants, that we may increase our Wealth and inrich our heirs: but the worst of all is, to lose our share of the joys of Heaven, and damn our Immortal Souls, that they that shall seize upon our Riches, may have wherewith to be Prodigal and Vicious.

2. I shall not undertake to determine, when and how far every one that can, should deprive himself, that he may spare for Charity, this can have no other measures, than

than ſuch as Piety and Chriſtian Prudence ſhall aſſign. Only I ſay that God knows our hearts and abilities, and we muſt approve our ſelves to him. And I hear our Bleſſed Saviour commanding to all without diſtinction, Luke 11. 41. *Give Alms of ſuch things as you have.* And the great Preacher of Repentance injoyn'd the multitudes that asked him what they ſhould do, Luke 3. 11. *He that hath two Coats let him impart to him that hath none: and he that hath meat let him do likewiſe.* I hear the Pſalmiſt declaring that *Bleſſed is he that conſidereth the Poor, for the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.* Pſal. 41. 1. And the Prophet inſtructing all Penitents on this wiſe, *Deal thy Bread to the Hungry, and bring the Poor that are caſt out, to thy Houſe; when thou ſeeſt the naked cover him, and hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh.* Iſa. 58. 7. I hear Religious *Tobit* giving this Leſſon to his Son, *Give Alms of thy ſubſtance, and when thou giveſt Alms, let not thy hand be Envious, neither turn thy face from any Poor, and the Face of God ſhall not be turned away from thee. If thou haſt abundance give Alms accordingly: If thou have but little, be not afraid to give according to that little; for thou layeſt up a good Treaſure for thy ſelf againſt the day of Neceſſity; becauſe that Alms do deliver from Death, and ſuffer not to come into darkneſs.* Tob. 4. 7. *&c.*

3. What can be ſaid more than all this

to

to prove Alms-giving to be much a Duty, and most advantagious? But yet let us hear also what the Beloved Apostle saith in this matter, 1 John 3. 17. *Whoso hath this Worlds good, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in Him?* If not the love of God, then self-love, that is, lust and sin, dwell and reign in him: and his Portion in the next world shall be with the rich man in the Gospel, *Luke* 16. who was cloathed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptuously every day, and yet would not give *Lazarus* so much as the crums that fell from his Table. The Conscience of the Covetous cryeth, or ere long will cry against him, why dost thou put by that poor hungry man? thou art his murtherer, in that thou art able and dost not feed him; that Bread which thou canst spare is his: those garments which fill up thy Trunks, belong to the Naked: and the money hoarded in thy Coffers, is the just right of the Necessitous. *Christ* in the great Judgment, will condemn to Hell such mercileſs wretches as thou art: *Go ye* (saith he) *into Everlasting Fire, for I was hungry, and you fed me not: I was thirsty and you gave me no drink: naked and ye clothed me not.* Mat. 25. 42. He doth not mention such pressing extreme necessities, as must be now supplied, and could be relieved by none

none else; such occur but seldome, not once perhaps in a mans life. Therefore we must not stay for such Extremities to be Charitable: but we must spare as much as we can, and what we can, we must give in Good Works, for Charity is the band of perfectness, and shall cover a multitude of sins. Neither yet must we as some do, delay our Charity till we can keep no longer what we have. *That which Death makes us give, if we could have given it before, will be nothing so acceptable, as what we our selves freely distribute, when we have power to keep it.*

CHAP. XVIII.

Of Patience in Bearing and Forbearing.

1. OF all the Virtues wherein Christians must exercise themselves, that they may come to Life Eternal, none is more excellent and none more useful than Patience. By it we imitate the forbearance and long-suffering of God, who provoked by so much wickedness and disobedience, yet doth good to all men, and makes his Sun to rise upon the Just and the Unjust. Patience governs the mind and preserves it in Peace and an even Temper; it breaks Anger,

Anger, and bridles the Tongue, and mortifies Pride and a high Spirit; it ends Quarrels, and entertains Friendship, and it conquers the World; it tames the Flesh, overcomes Temptations, bears nobly and meekly reproaches and persecutions, and it perfects and crowns the life of a Christian. If all men were Patient, the evils of mankind would be nothing so great nor so numerous as they are: and we should be happy with abundance of love and quietness. By Patience a wise and good man may be distinguish'd from a vicious fool. It is so diffusive a vertue, that it is necessary to all other vertues, and contrary to all vices: and God instructs and proves the best of his Children by exercising their Patience. Nothing can hinder but that injurious Words and Actions shall affect and stir up our minds: and nothing but Patience can make us masters of our selves, can pacifie our tumultuous Spirits, and restrain us from mischief and revenge.

2. Philosophers themselves have extold very high the Praises of this excellent vertue: and they made it the chiefest mark and ostentation of their own wisdome. But, as they know not the true God, from whom proceeds, and to whom tends all true vertue; so their Patience was false as well as their wisdom. But we that live in the School of *Christ*, are taught by him, that through

through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God: and this is the only true wisdom, to know *Jesus Christ* and him crucified, and to love, and chearfully bear his Cross. For a Christian must be made conformable to his Crucified Saviour, our life must be the Image of his Death: So that he is no Christian that hates and refuseth the Cross, and will not suffer. Let none of us sinful men that own God for Father expect to be without Chastisement in this World, for his own natural Beloved Son was not, though he was without sin: even the *Christ* was to suffer that he might enter into his Glory. *Every one in this life is visited with pains and sorrows, either for his conversion or for his greater perfection: but the most afflicted endures nothing that can be compar'd to the shame and the Cross of* Christ.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Adverſities are occaſions of Vertue and muſt be Patiently indur'd.

1. THis our preſent Life is the way through which we muſt go to Heaven: and in it we find all the properties that belong to a way: ſometimes it is even, ſometimes rough; ſometimes it is pleaſant, ſometimes full of briers, rocks and precipices; in ſome places it is crowded with company, in ſome it is deſart and ſolitary: and here and there you meet with wild beaſts and robbers; rain and fair weather daily ſucceed each to other, obſtacles and difficulties frequently occur, and even in Grace and Religion the Philoſophers ſaying doth take place, *Omnia fieri ſecundum litem*, that there is contention and oppoſition in all things. We ſee it in Vertue which is acquired by fighting, by reſiſting Temptations: and mans ſtrength and fortitude would be unknown and of no uſe, ſhould he not meet with afflictions, and uneaſie tryals. I know this is not the ſenſe of the world, the fools party is very numerous,

numerous, and they are all for eaſe and for pleaſure. If you take a proſperous one out of the herd, one that is every where flatter'd and loudly applauded, one whoſe Table abounds with coſtly dainties, whoſe Eſtate is great and daily increaſing, whoſe Houſes are ſtately and richly furniſh'd, whoſe worldly proſperity is complete, and is equally admired and envied: If you come to ſuch a one, and indeavour to perſuade him with the ſtrongeſt reaſons and ſweeteſt eloquence, that his is but a painted happineſs, a more empty vanity, grounded upon vulgar opinions and errors, and that croſſes and afflictions are much more eligible and beneficial, and lead to Bliſs and Eternal Glory: you ſhall certainly ſpeak that which is truth, but as certainly ſpend your breath in vain.

2. But ſo it is; God viſits his Children with ſorrows and calamities that by experience they may learn, how inconſiderable, how weak and periſhing and how falſe are all thoſe Enjoyments wherein the World place their felicity: and contrariwiſe, how advantageous are thoſe afflictive diſpenſations which men count the worſt of evils, and how ſweet and laſting thoſe comforts they deſpiſe. It is therefore the part of a wiſe man, in all events, in all croſſes, meekly and cheerfully to comply with Divine Providence: and to look beyond the cloud

cloud and there fix his heart, where true joys are to be found. Let the wicked rage and persecute the righteous as far as they can, let what calamities will happen: yet still it will remain true what *Solomon* saith, that *No Evil shall happen to the Just.* Prov. 12. 21. Prosperity shall not deprave, and Adversity shall not cast him down: but he will say with the Prophet, Jerem. 10. 19. *Truly this is my grief and I must bear it*; 'Tis best it should be as it is, and I would have it so, for it is God's will. *All creatures whether they will or no, must be subject to God: but some like children chearfully obey and do what is just, and some like slaves bear punishment and suffer what is just, but all men are bound by the Divine Laws, either to pain or obedience.*

CHAP. XX.

That we must bear patiently the little Vexations that happen daily.

1. MAny bear patiently imaginary crosses which never happen, they fancy to themselves great evils to come, and they go through them with great courage, and upon this account reckon themselves

ſelves patient, and mean while the little vexations that occur daily diſſolve them into peeviſhneſs and fretful anger, and they cannot bear the leaſt croſs or contradiction when it is preſent. But we muſt beware of this illuſion, and conſider that great occaſions of patience happen but ſeldome, whereas the leſſer are very frequent; almoſt every hour we may have opportunities of exerciſing this vertue, either by bearing with others, or by checking and correcting our ſelves. And we ſhould always bear more chearfully that croſs which is of God's ſending, than that which is our own choiſe: for that which God appoints is always beſt, whereas we are ignorant and often deceived. As a ſick man therefore would rejoyce to have met with a skilful Phyſician, able and willing to cure his otherwiſe mortal diſtemper, and would drink and ſuffer any thing from him: *So ſhould we gladly and thankfully take the bitter Cup from Gods hand, whatever it be filled withal, and though malice and envy reach it out to us; for thereby God reſtores our dying Souls to health, and fits us for an endleſs life.*

2. This holy confidence and reſignation will take the ſting out of all afflictions; when we are thus diſpoſed and thus willing to receive them, they ſhall not be half ſo grievous, and they ſhall be much more advantageous. Neither ſhall the oppoſitions of

of the flesh, nor the reluctancies of nature be an hindrance to this, as long as we pray and fight against them, and those acts of our minds, which being free are capable of rewards or punishments, side with God against sensual affections. But indeed if the man murmurs, and transported with passion, bites the Rod he should kiss, and goes on in disobedience, then his will is rebellious against God, and his sufferance shall find no acceptance and shall have no remuneration. Those vertues are much easier which consist in action, than such as are passive and bind us to suffer; for the scene of the first is without us, and the exercise of the second within, upon the tenderest part of us, our natural desires and affections. But can we want courage to bear patiently, for Gods sake, those petty evils and afflicting occurrencies we daily meet withal: when Soldiers bear much more, upon a poor and uncertain account? they expect rest when they are old, or a fading laurel, and upon the groundless hope of this, how much of cold and heat, hunger and wearines, pains and dangers, necessities and inconveniencies of all sorts do they not indure? And we that expect and are sure of Eternal Rest within a short time, shall we shrink for a short labour or a short affliction? shall we complain and be dejected, when they chearfully go through a much

much greater misery? *what even we ſuffer in this world would be light and eaſie, if we conſider'd what reward God hath aſſigned to our patience.*

CHAP. XXI.

That we ſhould Rejoyce in Tribulations.

1. AS in building, one ſtone requires more cutting and carving than another, according to the nobler place the Maſter-builder hath aſſigned to it: ſo muſt we go to the divine pleaſure for to know the reaſon why one man ſuffers more than another; for God hath appointed to every man his Croſs, anſwerable to his ſtrength, and to that Crown which is laid up for him. Therefore as the marble deſign'd for Ornament would patiently ſuffer the Carvers ſtrokes, and even be thankful, had it the uſe of ſenſe and reaſon: ſo ſhould we joyfully and thankfully receive the various afflictions wherewith God, as with a cutting inſtrument doth poliſh and beautifie us, to exalt us to a higher place of Glory in his Heavenly Palace. He prevents the deviation and ruine of his beloved, by chaſtizing them: and for this the wicked are inſtru-

instrumental, by their malice and persecutions, they forward the vertue and the happiness of the just. Therefore should we be meek and loving to our enemies, who certainly procure us great advantages: or at least we should look upon them as being commission'd by God, as *David* did upon *Shimei*, 2 Sam. 16. 10. *The Lord* (saith he) *hath said unto him, go and curse* David, *and who shall say, wherefore hast thou done so?* For were it not Gods permission, they could do us no injury: and God would never permit them, but in order to his Glory and our own Salvation. So that in all the wrongs and vexations which we suffer, we must not seek for comfort from created things, for they are vain and vexatious themselves: but we must go directly to God, who hath appointed us all our pains and sufferings, and will make them beneficial to us, and at last will turn them into joy.

2. Let us therefore look upon afflictions as very necessary and useful to us: and let us receive them as pledges of Gods love, and assurances of his care for us: according as St. *James* exhorts, Jam. 1. 2. *My Brethren count it all joy when you fall into divers Temptations; knowing this, that the tryal of your Faith worketh Patience: but let Patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and intire wanting nothing.* Reproaches, slanders, persecutions, and all other evils we

we ſuffer in this world, are to be lov'd by pious men and to be counted good: for though they be afflictive to fleſh and bloud, yet they proceed from the divine pleaſure, they come to us from God: and as our Bleſſed Saviour told his unjuſt Judge, John 19. 11. *They could have no power at all againſt us, if it were not given them from above:* So that in all events we may meekly ſubmit and reſt ſatisfied, conſidering *this power from above.* And if we do not thus conſider and receive our ſorrows; if we view them by themſelves, and not in their firſt cauſe, that wiſe God who is the contriver of them, and the fountain of all goodneſs: then our minds will be afflicted with a thouſand grievous fancies of things paſt, preſent, or to come, which yet never were or ſhall be: and we ſhall be ſleepleſs and reſtleſs, full of anguiſh and fears and diſtractions. Whereas if we uſed our ſelves to refer all things to God, and did look up to him in our Tribulations, we ſhould find reſt and tranquillity, his gracious will and appointment would anſwer and ſilence all our objections: and whatever hapned we could quietly ſay with patient Job, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil? the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* That God who will have me to be afflicted is gracious and compaſſionate,

and

and hath a tender care of me: *He hath laid this cross upon me, which I resolve to bear, till he himself is pleased to take it off.*

CHAP. XXII.

That Detractions and Derisions must be indur'd and derided.

1. IF we grieve more for the Evil men speak against us, than for the Evil we our selves commit against God: then 'tis a plain demonstration, self-love prevails in us above the love of God. He, infinitely perfect and holy, bears patiently with innumerable blasphemies and provocations, and all the while bestows many blessings upon the offenders: And we wretched sinful creatures, who can hardly hear worse than we deserve; a disobliging word, or the least mention of our faults puts us into a fit of anger and fury; though we infinitely deserve it, we will not bear with reproof or contempt. Whereas indeed we should rather fear the undeserved praise of men, lest the prosperity and honour of the world cut off our communion and fellowship with the Cross of *Christ*. Should the pains which our sins

deſerve, and the Torments *Chriſt* ſuffere
for them, be laid in one ſcale, and in th
other, the evils and injuries we ſuffer: the
would have no weight, and be nothing com
par'd to the other. And farther, if it b
conſider'd that the injuries we receive, ar
made grievous according to our own ap
prehenſions, and not according to the in
tention of our enemies: the diſproporti
betwixt our ſufferings and deſerts wi
appear yet greater. For he cannot b
injur'd that ſlights injuries: and he is no
wounded that will not by his impatienc
tear open his wounds. The ſoft fleſh, no
the angry hand that flings the dart, is th
cauſe of the hurt. *Should a mans body be har
as a rock, arrows thrown againſt it coul
never enter: and 'tis from the ſoftneſs and frailt
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saying, Mat. 5. 11. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsly.* Let men think and say what they will, we are happy if our conscience doth not accuse us before God. Mens opinions and their judgments are false and inconstant, and vain, and can make us neither better nor worse; and therefore Sr. *Paul* saith that if we seek to please men we cannot be the servants of *Christ*, Gal. 1. 10. For it is impossible for one to please all; mens thoughts differ as their inclinations: and what some admire, others will censure. When a Philosopher was told that others laugh'd at him, he answer'd, *At ego non derideor*, that others might laugh, but he was not laugh'd at, for it neither did hurt nor afflict him. Meaning, *that those injuries are nothing, for which we our selves will not be concern'd.*

CHAP. XXIII.

Remedies against Discontent and Anger for what abuses we receive.

1. IT would be much to the purpose of comfort and patience in all our adversities, to fix our minds stedfastly upon

deſerve, and the Torments *Chriſt* ſuffered for them, be laid in one ſcale, and in the other, the evils and injuries we ſuffer: theſe would have no weight, and be nothing compar'd to the other. And farther, if it be conſider'd that the injuries we receive, are made grievous according to our own apprehenſions, and not according to the intention of our enemies: the diſproportion betwixt our ſufferings and deſerts will appear yet greater. For he cannot be injur'd that ſlights injuries: and he is not wounded that will not by his impatience tear open his wounds. The ſoft fleſh, not the angry hand that flings the dart, is the cauſe of the hurt. *Should a mans body be hard as a rock, arrows thrown againſt it could never enter: and 'tis from the ſoftneſs and frailty of our minds, that reviling words and affronts have power to make impreſſion.*

2. Bleſſed is he that ſo orders his life, that malice it ſelf cannot faſten a calumniation upon him: and next to him, bleſſed is he that indeavours to be innocent, and to have a good conſcience in all things: otherwiſe he is a peeviſh fool that will not hear what he delights to do. But if it ſo happen that notwithſtanding our Chriſtian prudence and our perſeverance in well doing, men will ſpeak ill of us: then this is our comfort, that we ſuffer with *Chriſt* undeſervedly, and we muſt remember his

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God, and take it off of our trouble, which we increaſe by reflecting on it: for whilſt we affect our ſelves with pitty, at the conſideration of what we ſuffer, we ſoften our ſpirits, and the ſenſe of our miſery makes the deeper impreſſion upon them. Now all our afflictions proceeding from a preſent or a feared loſs, the beſt and moſt univerſal remedy againſt them, would be to ſet our affections upon that ſupreme increated Good, which is ſubject to no change and can never be taken away from them that love it. And that we may alſo obſerve an outward *Decorum*, and not diſgrace our ſelves by giving way to impotent paſſions, we muſt refrain and quite hold in our tongue, as ſoon as we find our ſelves provoked by any word or deed: for as it is a ſymptom of a weak ſtomach, not to be able to digeſt harder meat, ſo 'tis a certain ſign of a poor and weakly ſpirit, not to have ſtrength enough to bear with a croſs word or a croſs accident: and it was the ſaying of a Wiſe and Religious man, that he never found any thing ſo grievous, but by ſilence he did overcome it. *For whatever others do to vex us, comes to nothing if we ſlight it: and if we ſhew our ſelves much concern'd, we betray our weakneſs or our guilt, and we make it appear that we well deſerve the abuſe.*

2. But 'twill not be enough thus to repreſs our grief and our talkativeneſs: we muſt

must farther reprove and humble our selves with the consideration of our sinfulness and unworthiness, acknowledging we deserve more contempt than can be here pour'd upon us; for a wise and good man, will not only regard what he suffers, but what he deserves to suffer for his offences against God. Also let no man judge and condemn another, remembring the saying of St. *Paul*, Ro. 2. 1. *Thou art inexcusable, O man, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thy self, for thou that judgest, dost the same things.* For 'tis very unfitting, he that owes ten thousand talents, should be a severe exacter of his Brother's mite: and he is a fool that thinks to cure others by his distemper, that is, by his pride and his impatience. *Who art thou* (saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 14. 4.) *that judgest another mans servant. To his own master, he standeth or falleth: And how canst thou say to thy Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thy self beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye*, Luke 6. 42. God alone that can amend and forgive, or else punish the sins of men, hath right to judge of them: our part is to prevent them if we can, or else bring men to repentance: however to hide and bear with them: indeavouring first to amend our own faults, before we take upon us to correct others. *As God is merciful and patient to us all, so must we be to our Brothers.*

CHAP. XXIV.

Remedies againſt Impatience.

1. MAny and various are the affairs a man muſt go through in his life, and very different are the humors and companies he muſt converſe withal: ſo that it is next to impoſſible all men ſhould be of his opinion, and all things ſhould fall out according to his mind: therefore he muſt reſolve before hand and be very careful that he loſe not his Peace and his Patience, whatever happen. To that end let him conſider in all his concerns and undertakings, what things may come croſs to his deſires and above his power to help: and having took a view of them, let him prepare himſelf to bear them if they come. For this will avoid the ſurprize, and leſſen the grief, and compoſe the mind. This muſt be therefore our firſt and chiefeſt task, to underſtand the nature of things, and to uſe them accordingly: as that they may be taken from us; and they are and muſt be ſubject to thouſands of changes and chances, which we cannot hinder; and they are to ſerve, not to command us;

and

and withal they are out of our power; so that we must not be troubled if we cannot dispose of them, as we would.

2. These considerations well weighed will make a wise mans mind stedfast and even; able to entertain all events with a generous indifferency. Is he depriv'd of his good name, of his estate or liberty? is he threatned with persecutions, or with death it self? he is not mov'd nor dejected; he had consider'd long before, that such things might happen whether he would or no, and now he can bear and overcome them. 'Tis not outward things that wound us, but the wrong notion that we have of them; our own mistaken conceits do us the most hurt. No man grows pale with fear or perplext with anguish, but he that passionately would avoid or obtain that which is not in his power; mind your duty, and let not your passions go out of your own sphere, and you shall avoid all those troubles which come from abroad, where mans Jurisdiction cannot reach. The Christian Martyrs were constant in the midst of their wearied tormentors, their patience could not be conquer'd: even women and children were undaunted in the midst of the flames, they could not be overcome though they might be kill'd: because they valued not those things which Tyrants might give or else take away. Things

without were nothing to them: but things within, things that were their own, as their vertue, their divine faith and love: theſe they kept and preſerv'd, and in ſo doing were happy. *For theſe are the true goods which depend only from our ſelves: and which the world can neither give nor take away from us.*

CHAP. XXV.

Of Humility the proper Vertue of Chriſtians.

1. *Learn of me*, ſaith our Divine maſter, the eternal wiſdom, the inexhauſtible fountain of Grace and Vertue. *Learn of me*; what? ſure ſome great matter; for he that bids us learn, hath himſelf created Heaven and Earth, and commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs. Will he therefore teach us to make a new world, and to bring things out of nothing alſo? No, that belongs only to God. He bids us learn, not what he made, but what he, himſelf was made for us, *who being in the form of God, yet made himſelf of no reputation, taking on him the form of a Servant, and being made in the likeneſs of men*, Phil. 2.

Learn

Learn of me therefore, ſaith he, not to raiſe the dead or caſt out Devils; not to cleanſe lepers or give light to the blind; not to walk on the Sea, or to work ſuch wonders as he enabled ſome to do: but *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*, Mat. 11. 29. He would not teach what himſelf would not do, but he himſelf becomes our leſſon, and this he makes the ſum of his wiſdome and his ſaving doctrine, that we learn to be meek and humble after his example. *So great, ſo difficult a thing was lowlineſs, that we could not learn it, but from the humiliation of the moſt higheſt.*

2. Indeed human pride can be cur'd by none, but him who being God, *yet humbled himſelf and became obedient to death, even the death of the Croſs.* And humility is the chiefeſt vertue of Chriſtians; proper to them alone; unknown to the Philoſophers and wiſe men of the world; recommended by *Chriſt*, by his Example and by his Precepts, above all other duties: That we following him in his abaſement, might at laſt come to his glory. Now that we may think meanly of our ſelves, we muſt ſeriouſly conſider who it is that calls us; the wretched State whence he calls us; the Bliſs he calls us to; our perverſe dulneſs to follow, and the aſſiſtances he gives to forward us. For we ſhall never come to the prize of our high calling, except hu-

mility goes along, and follows our beſt works, which are the ſteps we make towards it: *Becauſe our vertues ſhall avail nothing, if we be proud of them, and if we ſeek for praiſe and glory here, we ſhall not have any hereafter.*

3. If at any time our thoughts be lift up, and we fancy our ſelves to be ſomething, the Earth which is always preſent will tell us whereof we are made and whence we had our origin. For duſt we are, and to duſt we muſt needs return; and upon this humble and low foundation we muſt build the higheſt vertues. For if a man had the gift of miracles and could remove mountains; if he could ſpeak all languages and foretel things to come; if he had converted all the infidels, and given all his ſubſtance to the Poor: yet he would be in great and perpetual danger of falling, and loſing his reward by pride; except he were always mindful of his peril and his infirmity: and except diffident of himſelf, he ſtill made it his buſineſs, to work out his Salvation with fear and trembling. *The true wiſdome and ſafety of Chriſtians, is to learn to be humble.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

From God we turn'd away by Pride, to him we must return by humility.

1. PRide the first and the worst of sins took beginning when the Rebellious Angels, proud of their excellency, lift up themselves against God; saying in their cursed ambitious thoughts (as the Prophet *Isaiah* is thought to mean, *Isa.* 14. 13.) *I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* With the same wickedness mankind came to be infected, when by the Serpents fraud, *Adam* was perswaded to aspire to the being like his Maker, happy in himself, without dependance: for, *The beginning of Pride is, when one departeth from God, and his heart is turned away from his maker,* Ecclus. 10. 12. And so *Pride is the beginning of Sin*; and that with its appendant miseries, is the inheritance we all derive from our first Parents; to seek and regard our selves in every thing; to forsake God and aim at our own glory and excellency.

2. That

2. That we may therefore return to God, from whom we are fallen by Pride, we muſt go back in the way of humility; the baſis or foundation whereof, is the ſenſe of our frailty and miſery; the ſincere acknowledgment that we owe nothing to our ſelves, and that we are nothing and can do nothing. For God created mans body out of the Earth, and breathed into him a Soul made out of nothing, and man was adorned with many graces, and was holy and happy: but by ſin he defaced Gods workmanſhip, forfeited all his gifts, and ſo foully defiled himſelf, that nothing in nature can make him clean again. Nay, though by the mercies of our Redemption man hath been reſtored to the poſſibility of bliſs and holineſs, yet by his choiſe and his free-will, he would remain in his former ſtate of ſinfulneſs and miſery, ſhould not the Divine Grace actually bring him out of that unhappy condition: ſanctifying his heart, and bringing him into the liberty of the Sons of God.

3. For who but *Chriſt* by his Free-Grace, can chuſe and bring a man out of that maſs or heap of perdition, wherein we are all involv'd by nature? If any one puffed up with Pride, anſwer that his Faith, his Prayers is Righteouſneſs, have made the difference betwixt him and them that remain in their corruption, the Apoſtle replies

replies upon him, but *what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not receiv'd it?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. Again saith he in another place, 2 Cor. 3. 5. *We are not sufficient of our selves to think any thing, as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* And, *Without me ye can do nothing*, saith our Blessed Saviour: that no flesh should glory before him, but as it written, *He that glories should glory in the Lord.* Sinners can have no just cause to glory in themselves: neither can the Just glory but in him, to whom they sing with the Psalmist, *Thou O Lord art my glory, and the lifter up of my head*, Psal. 3. 3.

4. But may not a man glory that he hath not rejected Gods gracious offers? This if he did, would be the same folly as if a man should boast, that whereas he could have made himself miserable, and drown'd himself if he would, yet he had not done it. But yet even our receiving Gods free benefits, proceeds from a new mercy: which were it denyed us, and should Grace withdraw from us her light and assistance, we should neither value the gifts of God, nor know how to use them aright. We must therefore mortifie the desire of our own glory, as we desire God would make and account us righteous; let the sincere love of God make us despise the praise of men;

men; let truth take place, we have no cauſe to glory in any thing, for nothing good is our own. This is the ground and the perfection of all true vertue, to know and be truly perſwaded that we are, and have, and can do nothing of our ſelves: for it is God that works in us to will and to do. Therefore let us fear and beware, for God who gives grace to the humble, doth take it away from the Proud.

CHAP. XXVII.

The Character of a proud man.

1. PRide is a ſwelling or lifting up of the mind, whereby the man would reach and ſtretch himſelf beyond his narrow bounds, and attribute that to himſelf which is not his own. This is joyn'd with an high conceit of himſelf and of his great worth, which he indeavours to propagate to others, boaſting upon all occaſions his birth, dignities and riches, and thoſe accompliſhments of body and mind, which he thinks make him great and mighty, and much ſuperior to others. This opinion gets ſtrength, and the mans Spirit grows more high and arrogant, if he hath withal great

great Riches and a great Retinue, ſtately Houſes and Garments, Gold, Jewels, and all ſuch Ornaments, as are the effects and the ſigns of mens vanities. Then he muſt have great Titles, loud Applauſes, and much Reverence from others, to teſtifie that they acknowledge him for their Superior. And theſe he counts the ſovereign happineſs of this life: and as for life Eternal, he minds it not, and he cares not for it.

2. Hence proceeds a great averſion and hatred againſt all things that betray his weakneſs and defects, and his being in any thing inferior to others. Hence Anger and ſullen diſcontent, when any thing happens or is diſcover'd, which reflects ſome diſgrace and leſſens his excellency. Hence a perpetual fear, leſt what he undertakes ſhould not ſucceed to his credit. For indeed all men generally ſeek to be ſeen and to be commended: even ordinary people in the meaneſt imployments ſeek to excell others of the ſame calling, and to make an oſtentation of their skill. Nay the Philoſophers themſelves affected praiſe, whilſt they ſpake againſt it: and they aim'd at glory, writing brave things for the contempt of it. The infection of Pride runs ſecretly, and is hardly to be diſcern'd: and when the beſt of men think to have plucked up by the root that curſed plant

out

out of their hearts: yet there remain ſmall ſlips and ſtrings, which will bud forth, though they cannot be found out. We muſt therefore love and follow the truth, and utterly deſpiſe vain ſhews and falſe praiſes: and with a ſtrict obſervation, and the fear of the juſt and all-ſeeing God, we muſt kill and ſtifle all proud and vain-glorious thoughts. As ſmoke riſing out of a furnace, becomes a great cloud and darkens the Sun, but being but ſmoke is ſoon blown away: ſo he mounts up aloft, that is high-minded and proud, and diffuſeth himſelf to obſcure others, and thereby grows thin and puffed up with wind, and wanting the ſolidneſs of vertue, he ſoon paſſeth away and comes to nothing. *I have ſeen the wicked in great power and ſpreading himſelf like a green bay-tree: yet he paſſed away, and lo, he was not: yea, I ſought him, but he could not be found.* Pſal. 37. 35.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Motives and Reasons for Humility.

1. OUR station is very slippery, and the heavy burthen of our corrupt nature doth perpetually weigh us down: so that, without Gods right hand uphold us, we can neither stand, nor yet walk firmly, we are always in danger of falling. If we have not fallen into grievous crimes, 'tis Gods gracious providence hath remov'd the occasions from us: else we too well know by experience, how weak we are in the neighbourhood or under the assaults of a temptation. If any good thing be in us, it is very small and imperfect: and if the least defect can marr the best work, who who then can say he hath ever done any thing altogether good and without any mixture of evil? Who is there indeavours after perfection and is as careful of his Salvation, as are the children of this world for pleasure and riches? And are we not all conscious of many great sins, of the pardon whereof we can hardly be certain, because that depends upon our Repentance,

tance, which ſtill remains many ways imperfect? Nay, if we were ſure of the pardon of what is paſt, yet have we not reaſon to fear for the future, leſt we fall and periſh.

2. Whoever ſhall duly conſider all this, how little is our vertue and our aſſurance, how great our danger and frailty, will hardly pride or truſt himſelf in any thing: but will find much cauſe to tremble, and trembling to acknowledge that he is nothing, and of himſelf can do nothing. As when the Sun goes away, the Air immediately becomes dark: ſo doth the Soul grow blind and impotent, as ſoon as God withdraws his light and gracious aſſiſtance. He that rightly underſtands this truth, cannot but deſire, it may be known to others alſo: and he that acknowledgeth from his heart, that he deſerves nothing but ſhame and confuſion, cannot refuſe to bear contempt, without oppoſing the known truth. *Truth and humility are inſeparable: and he therefore is always moſt humble, that is beſt acquainted with the truth.*

3. It were an eaſie thing for a man to riſe again after he is fallen, if he would ſoon repair to the ſpiritual Phyſician, and from him receive help and directions: but whilſt men are poſſeſt with a ſpirit of pride, that they will not ſee their diſtemper, or they fancy they can cure it themſelves,

ſelves, they remain for the moſt part where they fall, and wallow in the mire till they die: and that becauſe they would not flee to God for ſuccor, and uſe thoſe means which he hath appointed; but they count the preſcriptions of the Phyſician worſe than the diſeaſe, flattering themſelves they ſhould do well enough, and by their own applications making the evil deſperate. For no man is more unhappy and ſure to periſh than he who being blind yet fancies he can clearly ſee: becauſe he conceiting he wants no mans aſſiſtance to guide him, is like to fall into every ditch, and into the great Precipice it ſelf. But let a man learn to know himſelf, according to the old ſaying, which was ſaid to have come from Heaven, *Noſce teipſum, know thy ſelf*: for then he ſhall know that of himſelf he can do nothing but fall and periſh; but that in God is his ſtrength and ſufficiency. Many lie down in their bondage, and faint under the burthen of their ſins; becauſe they will not be helpt, and they will not by humble prayer, ſeek to God for help; and in him truſt, of whom the Apoſtle ſays, *I can do all things through* Chriſt *which ſtrengthneth me.* Phil. 4. 13.

4. To yield and loſe heart is deſpondency: but true humility will raiſe us up, and make us chearfully undertake and perform the moſt difficult duties: confiding in

in his gracious help, who for us became man that he might make us partakers of the Divine Nature. As an Iron red hot, burns by the fire that penetrates its ſubſtance, and not of it ſelf: ſo a man becomes fervent and inflam'd, not of his dull nature, but by the fire of Divine Charity which God kindles in him: as alſo when he is ſaid to ſhine before men, it is by vertue of that divine light of Truth and Wiſdome, which God ſends in his heart. Man of himſelf can do nothing; he is but an inſtrument in Gods hand, from whom he receives power to will and to do; it is God that works all our works in us, as the Scripture ſaith. For if the Divine Love, and Light, and Wiſdom, depart from a man: he preſently becomes Dark, Cold, and Unactive, uſeleſs as an Inſtrument without an Artiſt. *Man of himſelf being nothing, and fit for nothing, muſt dwell in the ſenſe of his nothingneſs, as in his Center: for then he is moſt ſtrong in God, when he is moſt ſenſible of his own weakneſs.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

That the Humble man judgeth himself and not others, with a Character of him.

1. HUmility is a vertue which makes man vile his own eyes, by the knowledge of himself, attain'd by self-examination: for when the book of Conscience is opened, and our past sinful life search'd into, the Soul must stand as criminal before her own Tribunal, and there be by her self accused and condemn'd: and happy they that thus judge themselves, for they shall not be judg'd of the Lord. But woe to that Soul which soars high in lofty conceits, and dwells much abroad in vain inquiries: for then she remains unknown to her self, unacquainted with her own misery, and those her errors and failings, she should watch over and amend. Yet this is the case of many, and a sad case it is, to see wretched, ignorant and vicious persons, take no notice of their own follies: but prie into others infirmities, and observe their least miscarriages: and this commonly

commonly is the imployment of the moſt looſe and negligent; they are the more buſie to cenſure others, that they do not reprove nor correct themſelves. But 'tis not ſo with upright men that indeavour to know themſelves, for the greater proficients they are in that knowledge, the more humble they are and concern'd for themſelves, perceiving their great diſtance from perfection and trne holineſs: and finding ſo much work at home, the leſs they mind others, except where it is their duty.

2. This is the true diſcipline of the Saints, to exerciſe ther zeal againſt themſelves, and to bear patiently with the faults of others: for he that cannot bear with the imperfections of others, is himſelf the moſt imperfect. As God in Nature produc'd all things out of nothing: ſo in Grace he produceth all vertues out of a mans hearty perſwaſion of being nothing, out of the ſenſe of his own ſinfulneſs. That is true vertue that will bear with ſcorns, contempt, and injuries: being grounded upon humility: but if this fails, vertue is but Hypocriſie, a vain oſtentation, and an empty name. *He gathers duſt before the wind, that is not humble, and yet would be vertuous.*

3. But he is to be counted truly humble, who is more lowly than the loweſt condition, and higher than the higheſt: who is not

not lift up with honours, nor swelled with the wind of mens applauses: and who is never so much afflicted and disgrac'd, but he is perswaded he deserves much worse. He is truly humble who is willing to be vile in the eyes of others, as he ever is in his own: who if he hath advanc'd an untruth is not asham'd to retract it: and to ask pardon of others, if by surprize or any other way, he hath offended them in word or deed; this is known to good men to be a great self-denyal. He is truly humble that is careful to do nothing for which he may justly be despised, and yet he is content to be so: and meekly bears with reproches, grieving for the offence to God, but rejoycing in his own abasement. He whose most innocent actions are misunderstood and misreported, who is disappointed of his due reward, and requited evil for good, and yet is patient and contented, makes it appear that he neither values himself nor his best actions. The humble man is silent of himself and dead to the world: and when he is forsaken and persecuted, yet in God he finds refuge and comfort. He is decently courteous and obliging to all persons, even to them that are his inferiors. He compares what is natural to him, to the gifts of God in others, his imperfections to their vertues: and so entertains always mean thoughts

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of himſelf, and is content to have others prefer'd before him, and to ſit low and be conceal'd in his humility. I might add that humility will make a man obedient to his ſuperiors, meek and peaceable under Government, and always ready to believe better of the goodneſs and wiſdome of his Rulers than of his own: but theſe muſt ſuffice.

4. This is a rude draught and but an imperfect Image of that lovely creature called an Humble Chriſtian: whereby yet a man may diſcern how unlike he muſt be to the original, that comes not near to the copy. That is, how far he is from being maſter of that bleſſed vertue, which *Chriſt* our Bleſſed Lord, did ſo much recommend to his followers, by his loweſt and wonderful humiliation. In the exerciſe of humility there is no danger of exceſs; we can never be too humble: but we may eaſily not be humble enough, here the danger is great, as the crime alſo. As he that would come in at a door which is low of entrance, if he bows himſelf more than needs, there is no harm done; but if he comes too upright and never ſo little too high, he muſt bruiſe his head, if not break his skull: ſo the loweſt humility will never hurt the Soul, but the leaſt Pride may deſtroy it. Let a Chriſtian therefore to avoid this danger, not onely not exalt himſelf, but

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even not equal himſelf to others. For in ſo doing he ſhall beſt imitate the Bleſſed *Jeſus, who being Son of God, yet took on him the form of a ſervant, that he might ſhew to us the true form of humility.*

CHAP. XXX.

Of the Conformity of our Will to Gods.

1. WE can offer to God nothing more pleaſing, no victim better and more acceptable, than our own will; intirely to reſign that to God, and deſire that in all things it may be ſubject and conformable to his bleſſed will, is that living and holy ſacrifice wherein God delights, which none but a Pious man can offer, and which is the higheſt act of Religion we can perform on Earth. For in this ſubmitting and conforming our will to the Divine pleaſure, we offer not to God any one particular thing alone: but our whole ſelves, Body and Soul, and all that we have without any reſervation. Therefore we ſhould make that our daily ſtudy; thus to deny and forſake our ſelves, to empty our hearts of all ſelf-deſires and ſelf-affections, that even here, God may be all in all in us, and we may be wholly

devoted to him; prepared and willing to be in all things diſpoſed of by him, according as he ſhall think good. For God will not work in us his good and acceptable will, if we have a will of our own, diſtinct from, and contrary to his; he requires the whole heart, and he that gives leſs, gives nothing. It may be allowed indeed to human frailty, that we ſhould wiſh and will after the manner of men: but then we muſt ſoon recollect our ſelves, and lifting up our heart to God, lay our will in the duſt, that we may acquieſce in him, and cleave to him, who being the Sovereign hath abſolute dominion over all. He is the Creator, we are his Creatures; he is the Lord, we are all his Servants; he is Omnipotent, we are weak and infirm: we muſt therefore reſtrain our own, and give up our ſelves wholly to his bleſſed will, ſaying in all contingencies, *Not as I will, O Lord, but as thou wilt.*

2. Thus Prayed our Bleſſed Redeemer, when he acted for us, and ſuffered in our ſtead: not that he whoſe Godhead is one with the Father, could will any thing contrary to him: but to teach us how to behave our ſelves, in reſigning all our deſires to God. Therefore he alſo taught us to make it our daily Prayer, *Thy will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*; that as the Angels are always ready to fulfil God's will,

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we may be ſo likewiſe; in all things deſirous to be obedient to his laws and diſpenſations; That that unhappy fight and contention may be taken away, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, Gal. 5. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh.* That ſo God's will may be obeyed by the whole Man, Body, Soul, and Spirit, without any oppoſition or reluctancy: and Nature may be governed by Grace, and Human affections be changed into Holy Charity: for this is the will of God, even our Sanctification. *There is one onely God, and he that cleaves to him, is one with him in Spirit and in will, and cannot but be Holy and Happy.*

3. There is not a more excellent duty than to receive whatever happens as coming from Gods hand, with a quiet and a contented mind: *caſting all our care upon him, for he careth for us,* 1 Pet. 5. 6. There is no true evil, but the evil of ſin; all other things ſo counted, do proceed from God; *Proſperity and Adverſity, Life and Death, Poverty and Riches come of the Lord,* ſaith the Son of *Sirach,* Ecclus. 11. 14. Therefore God ſaith by his Prophet. *Iſa.* 45. 7. *I form the Light and create Darkneſs; I make Peace and create Evil; I the Lord do all theſe things.* Whereas therefore all things, even thoſe that ſeem to be moſt accidental, depend upon Gods moſt wiſe determinations and

ſecret counſels, we muſt ſubmit our ſelves to his moſt gracious Providence, and interpret the moſt afflictive events as ſigns of his care and good will for us: caſting our ſelves into the arms of his infinite mercies, and ſuffering him to fit us for himſelf, by what means he pleaſeth.

4. Slanders, Treacheries, Oppreſſions, Loſſes, Rapes, Thefts, Sickneſſes, Plagues, Famines, and all other calamities publick or private, they are all ſent and appointed by God, for to puniſh or reclaim wicked men, or elſe to exerciſe and perfect the Righteous: therefore under the ſenſe or apprehenſion of any of theſe, let a Chriſtian humble himſelf and worſhip, and ſay with patient *Job*, *Bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* Maſters commit their work and their affairs to truſty ſervants, and yet acquaint them not with their ſecret intents and all the train of their deſigns: ſo ſhould we like faithful and humble ſervants, yield to God chearfully an active or paſſive obedience, in all things: unconcern'd for the final event, how in any particulars God will diſpoſe of us or of others; taking that to our ſelves which our Bleſſed Lord told St. *Peter* once, *What is that to thee? follow thou me*; follow me, whatever happens, and mind nothing elſe. If thou art entred upon a good deſign, ſome profitable undertaking, and canſt not go on with

with it by reaſon of ſickneſs or ſome other hindrance which thou canſt not help, grieve not and be not dejected, for God knows what is beſt for thee; follow him whereſoever he calls. *Thus if we would meekly entertain Gods will and be guided by it, Peace and Tranquillity would dwell in our hearts, and perturbations could have no acceſs to the place wherein God dwells and reigns.*

CHAP. XXXI.

Of the Reſignation of our ſelves to God in all things.

1. 'TIS good to wiſh that God would afflict us, and that we may ſuffer for him and from him: but 'tis yet better to be wholly devoted to him, ſo as to follow without anxiouſneſs or reluctancy, whitherſoever he is pleaſed to lead. Natural life ſhews it ſelf by the acts of ſenſe and motion; Spiritual life, by the ceſſation of thoſe acts: when we no longer live our ſelves, but *Chriſt* lives in us. For he that truly forſakes himſelf, and transfers the motions of his mind, and the liberty of his will to God, lives here as a new born Infant, without choiſe or deſires of his own;

having wholly permitted himself to the Divine guidance, he is free from himself, and lives the life of Grace. In all cross accidents, he looks and rests upon Providence, and of all the World calls nothing his own: because he himself is not his own, but Gods, in whose hand he is as an instrument, to be done with and put to such use as the Master shall please. He is not curious and inquisitive after Divine secret Counsels, but he adores them, and believes them to be always just and equitable: and therefore in what matter, and for what cause soever God is pleased to determine any thing, he assents, and yields, and thinks it best.

2. He depends upon God for all the concerns of Nature, of Grace and Glory: and divesting himself of his own liberty, he chuseth Gods will and makes it his own. And whereas by natural corruption man hath too much complacency in himself, and delights in the best acts of his will, rather as his own, than as good, whence proceed many troubles: he that hath parted with his own will, to make it one with Gods, suffers no grief in himself nor any creature, but always rejoyceth in his acquiescence to the Divine pleasure. At best, if natural affections cannot be quite subdued, yet this prevails; and the man easily overcomes his sorrows, and finds in God peace and satisfaction. *None can resist*

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the Almighty, he doth whatsoever pleaseth him, and his will must absolutely take place in all things: therefore better it is willingly to follow than be drag'd: better it is to comply with, than to be forc'd by it.

3. Our content and tranquillity consists in our meek subjection to the will of God. And even if we have fallen into great and mischievous sins, though we are seriously to repent, to chastise and afflict our selves: yet we must not give way to distracting perturbations, and a tedious and confused spirit: but rather we must humbly implore the Divine mercy which permitted us to fall, that we might not be high-minded but fear, and be sensible of our own frailty in our fall, and of the Divine Grace, when we rise up again and stand: we must patiently wait upon God, and beg for Pardon and the return of his favour, with a contrite heart: and without impatience or amazement, make it our diligent study and indeavour to mortifie our sins and amend our lives. A faithful and wise servant under God, seeks and desires nothing but that his Lords commands may be fulfilled: he will always be disposed to say from his heart, *Thy will be done*, I am ready to do and suffer thy pleasure: *Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Mat. 11. 26. Wilt thou grant me health and plenty, and inward peace and joy:

or wilt thou have me be poor and ſickly, and to live in mournful ſadneſs and ſpiritual drineſs: thy will be done, do with me what thou pleaſeſt, for I am wholly thine.

4. This preparedneſs of mind and indifferency to all things that God ſhall pleaſe to ſend, will free a man from all anxious troubles and fears, and from being caſt down; nay, will make him undaunted, always peaceable or always victorious in all adverſities. We are forbidden by our Saviour *Chriſt* to be ſolicitous about food and raiment, how much more about ſuperfluous things, which miniſter only to vanity. We muſt do our duty and leave all to God, and reſt our ſelves upon his gracious and Almighty will: for even the peace of the Soul is loſt if it be ſought too anxiouſly. Too much care and inquiſitiveneſs after things to come, betray a timerous and unſettled mind, not yet reſign'd to God, and are the effects of ſelf-love afraid to ſuffer any thing. *God who ſees all things from above, knows what is beſt for every man; and he ſweetly and powerfully diſpoſing all things, takes a ſpecial care of that man, that depends and relies upon him.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

That the Hope of our Salvation muſt reſt upon God.

1. A Man guided by the Chriſtian wiſdom, will not only, as the Goſpel commands, leave all temporal things to Gods diſpoſal, taking no thought for the morrow: but alſo commit his Soul and Salvation to him, who never faileth them that truſt in him. In this hope, and in conforming his will to Gods will, he will work out his Salvation; admiring and reconciling together the Divine Juſtice and Mercy: and yet not ſeeking to enter into the deep abyſs of Gods ſecret judgments and decrees; a bold preſumption which belongs to none but to wicked impenitents, whoſe deſperate Lives make their Souls deſperate, becauſe they will not leave their ſins and return to God. 'Tis true indeed that no man without a ſpecial Revelation, can have a ſpecial aſſurance of his Salvation: but we have that which is as good to ſecure us againſt deſpair, and to ground an holy and comfortable hope upon. That

we are redeemed by the Bloud of *Chriſt*, and devoted to him in Holy Baptiſm, and that God is our confidence and refuge: always ready to help them that call upon him, and to forgive them that beg for pardon, with tears and contrition, and a ſerious purpoſe of amendment. And many more great and precious aſſurances we have that *God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son*; ſo that all his Providences are to fit us for it, if we do not wilfully fruſtrate all his ſaving methods and purpoſes: Only he would have our Election to be hid and ſecret, that ſecurity may not breed in us pride and negligence, and that *he that thinketh he ſtandeth ſhould take heed leſt he fall.*

2. Now therefore, becauſe the choſen are few, let every true Chriſtian live a Holy Life with the few, that he may make his Calling and Election ſure, and be counted worthy at laſt to receive the Crown of Life with the few. *Streight is the way and narrow is the gate that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*, ſaith our Bleſſed Saviour, *Mat.* 7. 13. Therefore we muſt walk in that narrow way, and that always with care and fear, even when we ſeem to run with moſt ſpeed, becauſe no man in reſpect of himſelf is abſolutely ſure of perſeverance. Yet our fear muſt not proceed ſo far as to make us faint, but only to make

make us wary, and make us put our trust and confidence in God, and with a chearful submission cast our selves upon him, both for time and eternity. If any one objects that he knows not how Gods will is affected towards him; I answer that Gods promises are sincere, and must be received as they are generally set forth in Holy Scripture, to all that will obey Gods revealed will: and moreover that his own will is much more uncertain, so that it is much more safe to trust Gods, for God we are certain is infinitely good. *He is extremely proud and unhappy withal that relies on himself more than upon God: but happy is he that confides in that gracious Lord whose mercies and promises are sure for ever, and in whom whosoever trusted was never confounded.*

CHAP. XXXIII.

That Love is the Spirit of Christian Religion.

1. THough it be by vertue of our Baptism and profession of the Christian Faith, that we are, and are called Christians, yet the Life or Soul of our Religion is Charity or the Love of God, whereby we

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are enabled to live godly, as becomes Chriſtians. For as God, by his great love wherewith he loved us, ſent his dear Son into the world, to die for us, that we might live through him: ſo are we to love God moſt affectionately, with all our heart and ſtrength, and our Neighbour as our ſelves, for his ſake. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins. Love therefore is the firſt and great Commandment on which depends the Law and the Prophets. Love is the foundation and excellency of our Faith, to know the love of God which paſſeth knowledge, that when we were enemies we were reconciled to him by the death of his Son. Love is that fire which our Bleſſed Redeemer came to ſend in the Earth, *Luke* 12. 49. which coſt him much to kindle, and which burns up mens droſs and impurities, and cannot be put out but where iniquity doth abound. And Love is the ſpirit of Primitive Chriſtians, who had one heart and one mind: and is even the Soul of the whole Church, whereby it is united and lives.

2. *Chriſt* left and appointed Love as the mark whereby his followers ſhould be known, Joh. 13. 35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.* And ſo in the love of God conſiſts our union with him, and it is the higheſt perfection of

of the Christian life. Now perfection is the work of Grace; therefore we must not relie upon our own strength, but we must beg of God daily and devoutly that by his good Spirit, he would kindle in our hearts the fire of an holy Charity, that by it we may be guided, quickned, and at last perfected. Neither yet must we lose heart, if we sometimes fall, as if all our hope were in our own strength: but we must acknowledge our own infirmity, and rise quickly, and pray more fervently, and afterwards fight more couragiously. Still pursuing after perfection, not only in words or ineffective wishes, but in hearty desires and serious indeavours: manifesting our love by daily mortifying our sins, and attaining to new and higher degrees of vertue. And then shall a Christian be most perfect and happy, when his heart shall be empty of himself, and free from the love of the world, but purified and burning with the love of God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Of the right Placing and Ordering of Love.

1. HE is a juſt and holy man who rightly values things according to their worth, and alſo loves them proportionably; for ſin is duly by wiſe men defin'd to be a diſorderly Love, and vertue to be a regular and well placed Love. And though there be other natural affections, yet they all proceed from and depend upon love, and if this be well placed and governed as it ſhould, the reſt cannot be unruly. It is vertue to love what deſerves to be lov'd: and wiſdome to make choiſe of it, and conſtancy to purſue it through all dangers and ſufferings: and to be drawn from it by no inticements, is temperance: and to prefer nothing to it is juſtice: and the order of Love muſt follow the order of things: and ſo God is to be lov'd infinitely more than any creature, becauſe he is infinitely better, more perfect and lovely. We become good and pure, by loving him who is the fountain of all goodneſs and

and purity: for our manners follow our affections; we become either vertuous or vicious according to the nature of what we moſt love.

2. The true object of Love is God, our Neighbour and our ſelves. God in the firſt place to whom all love is due, and from whom it muſt paſs to other creatures, according as they are more or leſs like him. By this, we muſt love our Neighbour becauſe he is, or that he may be juſt: and we muſt love our ſelves, in that we are, or elſe that we may be holy: taking from God the meaſure of our Love to all other things, that our Love may be regular and we may be happy. Let no man therefore love ſin, for thereby he hates and deſtroys his Soul: and let no man love himſelf for his own ſake, but upon Gods account, who is the chiefeſt Good, in whom alone we can be intirely happy. For God who alone is the Author of our being and well-being, hath ſet theſe bounds to our affections, that we ſhould love him with all our heart and with all our Soul; that we ſhould conſecrate to the ſervice of that Love, our underſtanding, our life, and all our powers; and that if we love any thing elſe, it be in reference and in ſubordination to him that deſerves all our Love, and ſhould be the maſter and diſpoſer of it. *The love of God muſt therefore lead the way to what elſe we ſhould*

ſhould love; it muſt always prevail and be the rule of all our affections, and then we cannot love nor do amiſs.

CHAP. XXXV.

Of the Neceſſity and Meaſures of Loving our Neighbour.

1. WE cannot love God as we ſhould, without we love our Neighbour, neither can we love our Neighbour except we love God. *If any man ſaith, I love God and hateth his Brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen? and this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, loveth his Brother alſo,* 1 Joh. 4. 20. The Commandment makes no exception; though the man be poor, though he be a ſtranger, nay, though he be vicious and thine enemy, yet he is thy Neighbour and thy Brother, and he muſt be lov'd. The expreſſions of thy love may vary according to his needs and thine opportunities. Yet they muſt be hearty, real, and effective: for, *The End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good Conſcience and of Faith unfained*

fained, 1 Tim. 1. 5. And we *must not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth*, 1 Joh. 3. 18.

2. As *Christ* loved us and gave himself for us, not that we deserv'd any love, but because he lov'd God, and us in God, to whom he purchast us; so must we love all men, not for ours or their sakes, but for God's sake, having no further regard to what is good in them, than only as it relates to God. True Christians are so strictly united together by love, that what one hath not in himself, he with joy finds it in others, and what one hath more than the rest, he willingly imparts it to all. As by our love to God, we are united and in some manner become one spirit with him: so by the mutual love of men, of Christians especially, they become one among themselves, so that what one hath to himself, is for the good of all, and what one hath not in himself, he hath and enjoys in others. Thus love is the fulfilling of the Law, and the fulfilling of all Righteousness. *According as is the mans Charity, in the beginning, progress, or perfection, so is his goodness and his righteousness: and then most perfect in this life, when even life it self is parted with for love.*

3. The *modus* or measure of love to our Neighbour is twofold, positive and negative. First, To do to him as we would he

should

ſhould do to us. Secondly, And not to deal with him any otherwiſe, than as we would he ſhould deal with us. Every one therefore, in the ſight of God to whom all things are known, muſt conſider ſeriouſly what he would others ſhould do, or not do to him: and if he deſires others ſhould be patient towards him, and bear with his faults and infirmities, and ſpeak well of him, &c. Then let him be careful to do ſo to others. 'Tis a ſure indication of a perverſe heart for a man in a private capacity, to do that to another, which he ſhould be ſorry to ſuffer himſelf. A good Chriſtian doth not inquire into the manners and faults of others, but leaves them to his view and correction to whom all judgment is given. He examines, judgeth, and puniſheth himſelf, and makes ſelf-reformation his ſerious and conſtant buſineſs. Whatever he ſees or hears his mind is undiſturb'd and abides in peace: for if it be good, he praiſeth God, if evil, he turns it to good, by turning his mind from it towards God in Prayers and Reſignation.

4. If his Office and Charity obligeth him to reprove and to correct others, he doth it with a zeal ſweet and benign, and compaſſionate to his Brothers infirmity: for roughneſs and ungovern'd paſſion cannot conſiſt with Charity. If the ill actions of others are capable of an excuſe, he excuſeth

cuſeth them; however he cenſures not: knowing that nothing human is ſo perfect and holy, but may be ill interpreted, and at the beſt may be ſome way defectuous enough, to be liable to reprehenſion, if carping men let looſe their cenſorious humors. Whilſt men are men, they will have ſome imperfections, and to be zealous againſt them, is under pretence of preciſeneſs, to give way to peeviſh impatience or proud cenſoriouſneſs. *He that is too buſie to tax and judge others, will never grow better himſelf.*

CHAP. XXXVI.

True Friendſhip and the true Offices of it.

1. FRiendſhip is the communion of good things, and therefore it follows the nature of thoſe things which friends have common. Now there being nothing truly good, but things ſupernatural and eternal, true friendſhip muſt conſiſt in the communication of theſe mutually. Hence it is that carnal friendſhip is ſoon diſſolved, becauſe things of ſenſe cannot laſt, nor always confine the ſpirit: whereas ſpiritual friendſhip

ſhip is never broken; for though it may ſeem to be interrupted by little angers and contentions, yet true piety and the love of God ſweetens the harſhneſs of them, and keeps the knot indiſſoluble. As for that friendſhip which too much ſets our hearts upon any perſon, and may be called Doting, it ſhould be ſtifled and avoided, as being miſchievous, and it is to be known by theſe tokens; when the party belov'd is always in our thoughts and we can never be well without him; when we fear his diſpleaſure above all things, when in him we reſt as in our center, and we ſacrifice to him all our actions and moſt important concerns. And let none flatter themſelves that this is pure innocent friendſhip, without any ſelf-intereſt: for it is altogether ſenſual, it depraves the heart and affections, it is an enemy to all wiſdom and true Religion, and it begins and ends in the fleſh; and 'tis to be obſerv'd, that this kind of friendſhip is never betwixt perſons truly good and vertuous.

2. Men of real worth are always well compoſed, grave, and of a ſweet deportment; they are courteous to all, but they are familiar to few, and they flatter none: in their converſation, modeſty, diſcretion, an exact juſtice, and an unaffected ſeverity is to be obſerved. They ſeek not to make a ſhew outwardly, their life is inward and ſecret,

ſecret, they live to God and to their own conſcience. They fairly converſe with men outwardly, when it is fitting: but their heart cleaves to God, and they will not diſturb themſelves with the ſilly impertinencies or petty concerns of the world: Their deſigns and affections differ much from the vulgar multitude, and therefore their words and actions are guided with greater and more divine wiſdome, they proceed from a higher principle, and they tend to an end much more excellent. Their ſoul and converſation, their treaſure and joys are all in Heaven, and if thither they draw not others after them, 'tis becauſe health propagates not it ſelf as diſtempers do. *Mans nature is corrupt, and now infections are catching, but cures are difficult.*

3. Men are ſociable by nature, and by a certain inſtinct they generally ſeek to pleaſe others, and to be loved by them: but that friendſhip which they ſo much indeavour after, will never be ſincere nor laſting, except their ſouls meet and are joyn'd in the love of God. That friendſhip which conſiſts only in the reciprocation of civil offices, is but a kind of a traffick, and it abides no longer than whilſt men can be uſeful one to another. That courteouſneſs and obligingneſs which friends ſo ſtrictly exact one of another, is but a vain deceit

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or paſtime, or at the beſt a game at words: and many that play beſt at it and with moſt readineſs, are they that cheat you moſt; they talk and promiſe gracefully and at a high rate, but theſe are but wind and come to nothing, when realities are wanting, and effects be required. Whereas if God were poſſeſt of mens hearts by Holy Charity, he would make their love to their Neighbours hearty and ſincere; there would be no contentions, no envies, no diſcords betwixt them; they would dwell in peace and a happy union together, every one not following his own will and deſires: but all conſpiring together in the will of God and his good pleaſure.

4. Self-love and ſelf-intereſt are the ſpring of all diviſions, for men therefore eſteem not their Neighbours nor ſeek their advantage, except it be for ſome ends of their own. Let a man be a great Philoſopher or a great Mathematician, very Learned or very Religious, few care for that, and few love him therefore: but if he be Rich and Prodigal withal, multitudes worſhip him and run after him. Vertue and Learning are valued by few, but many love and admire the money, and thence many wars and enmities, and many Law-ſuits do proceed. Man commonly loves not himſelf, becauſe he is partaker with others of humanity, but for ſome things which

which he fancies peculiar to himſelf: therefore he lives not as he ſhould to the community, loving others, eſpecially Chriſtians, for what they have common with him: but by his imaginary particular excellencies he ſeparates himſelf from the reſt of mankind, and upon that account cheriſheth himſelf, and cares for none elſe but for his own ſake, This well conſidered will make a wiſe man deſpiſe much the friendſhip of the men of this world. He will not purpoſely do any thing to get their hatred, but yet he will not much value their good words, and their fine pretences. *Privacy and ſilence will be pleaſant to him, and his delight will be in converſing with God, in whom alone all joys and all comforts are to be found.*

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of the ſeveral Acts of Charity to our Neighbours.

1. WE are never without an occaſion to ſhew our love to our Brothers: for ſo great and various are the miſeries of human nature, either corporal or ſpiritual, that we can hardly look or ſtep, without finding

finding objects of Charity. Even the best of men want our hearty Prayers that they may persevere: for such is our weakness, and such the strength of our enemies, that no man can be secure in this world: and many strong ones have been known fall suddenly and irrecoverably at the assault of an ordinary and often baffled temptation. And how much want they our assistance and our prayers, that are fast tyed with the bonds of their sins, that they may not perish in their dungeon and unhappy slavery. This is the case of all Infidels and Hereticks, besides many vicious Christians, who all together croud in the broad way to destruction, and heedlesly go down to Hell.

2. Bodily miseries also are frequently to be met with, and are altogether past number. Many are afflicted with hunger, thirst and nakedness, with debts and law-suits, and natural infirmities: Many are persecuted and oppress, reviled and slandered, imprison'd and begger'd, and perpetually vext and distracted. And many struggle with the terrors of a guilty conscience, and the fear and approaches of death, and the amazements of that last moment, on which depends Eternity. To all these our pitty and charity is to be extended, as God shall enable us; by alms, by counsel or comfort, by prayers, and

and by any means that are in our power. Christ *accepts as done to himself, what good we do for his sake to the afflicted: and in the great day of recompences, he will bountifully reward Charity.*

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Charity is also due to our Enemies.

1. TO love our Enemies is the highest and most divine vertue, and the sum of Christian perfection, which our Blessed Saviour most earnestly recommends, and absolutely enjoyns to all his Disciples, saying, Mat. 6. 44. *But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he maketh his Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* This Law is hard to flesh and bloud, therefore the Law-giver raiseth his subjects minds above all things earthly and natural, even to the highest glory and priviledges of Heaven. *That ye may be* (saith he) *the children of your Father which is in Heaven*: that despising our first

carnal birth, we may live according to this ſecond, whereof the honours and advantages in Chriſt, are ſo much above all we could hope from *Adam*. Enough certainly to make us chearfully comply with our duty, in this particular; not only to love but alſo to do good to our enemies, to ſpeak well of them, and to pray for them. And yet we are bound to this alſo by our greateſt intereſt, for except we thus forgive, and requite good for evil, our heavenly father will not forgive us our ſins, nor receive us into favour again, as our Bleſſed Saviour plainly aſſerts, *Mat.* 6. 15. and 18. 35.

2. Saint *Paul* likewiſe exhorts us, Rom. 12. 20. *If thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirſt give him drink.* And, *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* Men may be too ſtrong for us, that we cannot help: but we cannot be overcome of evil, except we pleaſe our ſelves. For to be overcome, is to hate them that do evil to us, and to ſeek to revenge it upon them, and 'tis in our power to do otherwiſe if we will; we may overcome evil with good, in pitying and forgiving thoſe that hate and injure us, and doing good to them, when we have occaſion. But this is better underſtood and perſwaded by Holy Charity, than by all argumentations and learned diſcourſes: Wee need not fear therefore the evils men can do to us, but thoſe we do againſt

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our selves by an angry, impatient, and revengeful Spirit. Let us but pray and labour for Christian Charity, and it will make us invincible, it will make us conquer and overcome all wrongs and afflictions. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.* Cant. 8. 7. The waters of Calamities and Persecutions, cannot put out that bright and ever-burning flame, kindled by God in pious hearts.

CHAP. XXXIX.

That the love of the Supreme Good, comprehends all goodness.

1. GOD is our true and sovereign good, him we must love with all our soul and strength, and to him we must direct all our ways. For the love of God comprehends all vertue and godliness; it is temperance, whereby we despise the pride and delights of the World, that God may have our whole hearts to himself; it is constancy, whereby we patiently bear any cross for and from God; It is justice, whereby we serve and obey God alone, and with due moderation command his creatures; it is prudence and the highest

wisdom, whereby we diligently avoid the obstacles, and use the means to come to God; it is all that can make us good, and make us happy. Now God must be lov'd for himself, for nothing can be better than God; he is infinitely good, and the beginning and end of all goodness. Therefore other things must be lov'd only for his sake, and in such proportion as they are more or less related to him: but he must be lov'd on his own account, as much as is possible, without bounds or measures, for his perfections are vast enough to swallow up all our affections, nay, they infinitely exceed them: so that nothing must share our love with him, it is all infinitely more than due to him.

2. It much concerns us therefore to be very careful, that those lower sensible goods wherewith we converse in this Earth, do not steal our hearts from God the giver of them. For though we set the greater value upon things Spiritual and Eternal, yet because now they are out of our sight and we cannot reach them, our affections to them are dull and heavy, and must be forc'd and lifted up: whereas they are brisk and swift to such things as are the object of sense, and we naturally fall down to our sensual nature, and without great care we cannot avoid to be by it cheated into self-love. If we would therefore be

repleniſh'd with the Holy and Beatifying Love of God, we muſt firſt caſt the World out of our hearts: for as a full veſſel cannot receive better liquor, except it be emptied, no more can our hearts love the Creator, if they are poſſeſt by creatures. Therefore ſaith Saint *John*, the beloved Apoſtle of *Jeſus*, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* 1 Joh. 2. 15. Worldly things are made for our uſe, and there is in them ſome beauty: but how much more beautiful is he that made them, and made us for the enjoyment of himſelf. *He that ſeeks for happineſs out of God, ſhall never find it: but if we love him above all things, then we are certainly happy, for he alſo loves us, and his favour is all.*

CHAP. XL.

Wherein consists the Love of God.

1. IT consists chiefly in joyfully suffering for God: for Love is a passion, and he therefore loves most that is most patient: as the Blessed Apostles returned from the Council rejoycing that they had been worthy to suffer shame and stripes for the name of *Jesus*. There may be much of nature in that tenderness of devout affection, and those tears that proceed from it, which are observ'd in some: but true vertues and solid joys do proceed from a Love practical and obediential. For he that truly loves, obeys in all things cheerfully, for favour not for fear: and if any burthen unpleasant to the flesh be laid upon him, Love makes it light and acceptable too: Therefore the Scripture saith that Gods Commandments are not grievous, to let us know we are not yet perfect in Love, when we find them grievous and difficult, and that we should pray and labour for an increase of Charity. The keeping of Gods Commandments is doubtless very hard to them that are acted by fear, but

but *Perfect Love casteth out Fear*: and as it fulfills the Law, so it makes it easie and delightful to us. For there is no trouble nor difficulty, in that service which Love obligeth to, what duties it binds on a good servant, are ever thought pleasant, and readily discharg'd: whereas the same imposed by fear, will make subjection grievous, and obedience to be cavill'd at, and by some means eluded.

2. By this they are convinc'd to want the Love of God, who complain of the strictness of Gospel-precept, and count morality a needless burthen, and by pretences and objections, seek to loosen the yoke, that they may shake it off. Such are they that have itching ears, and heap to themselves teachers after their own heart, such as may more comply with their humor, and inlarge their wanton liberty, by restraining Gods Laws and the injunctions of his Church. For men now adays will not be held in by duty, but will range according to their will; they have disputed themselves out of meekness and Charity: and now that their actions are not govern'd by plain precepts, but by opinions and parties, they may be warranted to do, in a manner whatever they lust. But alass, before *Christs* dreadful Tribunal, we shall not be judged by vulgar opinions, nor by the exceptions of contentious men, but

by truth and by divine Laws. There mens fancies and relaxations, and the doctrine of probability, as some do teach it, will be found to have been only pernicious cheats, whereby men sought to warrant their looseness and disobedience.

3. But these things are not weighed nor understood, but by them that sincerely love God, and are therefore ready always to obey him, in all things he requires. For 'tis by Love that the Soul gives up her self to God, and by cleaving to him, becomes one will and one spirit with him: for *God is Love*, saith the Scripture, *and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 Joh. 4. 16. And from this union flows an holy peace, and a delicious joy: when by love we are subject to our Beloved, and are possest of him, in whom and by whom are all things, and who is the fountain of all happiness, and the satisfaction of all our desires. Now by this shall a man know whether he truly loves God, and adheres to him, if God be the last end of all his purposes and actions, if his thoughts and desires always run after him, and if above all things he seeks to please and to obtain him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLI.

That there is more of Love in Practical Knowledge than in Speculation.

1. TO desire knowledge is natural to man, and still the more he knows, the more that desire increaseth, and then he rejoyceth in himself, and is much delighted with his great learning, when he thinks he knows much, and hath a great insight into the profoundest of divine mysteries, and so he comes to love his knowledge more than God the object of it. Thus the Philosophers, as St. *Paul* reproves them, when they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations: much admiring themselves and their discoveries. And thus also many Christians value more what they know, and what they can discourse of God and Religion, that they value both him and it. They speak great things of the love of Christ, and they love themselves for so speaking. In that knowledge they have of God, as in a mirror, they view themselves especially, and take little notice of the glass; they admire the vision, their

own act, more than the object which is ſeen. But God muſt be lov'd and worſhipt in ſpirit and in truth, in ſingleneſs and ſimplicity, without any reſpect to our ſelves.

2. As a Country-man plain and unlearned, who daily ſees the Sun, is more in love with the light of it, than a blind Philoſopher who can talk many things concerning the nature, and the cauſes and effects of light: ſo an honeſt pious man without Scholarſhip, by an active practical Faith, ſhews more love to God, than the profound Divine, by his ſubtleties and high ſpeculations. And as a learned man in Northern Countries, where no Vines can grow, may learnedly diſcourſe of their fruit and the properties of it, and yet not have ſuch an intimate acquaintance with the nature and ſtrength of the wine, as the plain vine-dreſſer that drinks it daily: ſo may a Religious illiterate man have a greater inſight into divine myſteries, and a more reliſhing apprehenſion of them, than many a man of great fame and learning. *For experience goes beyond all theory, and love paſſeth knowledge, and we much ſooner come to God by affection, than by ſtudious inquiries.*

3. We muſt not only therefore inform our underſtanding: but if we deſire to love God fervently, we muſt ingage our affections

affections and give our selves to Prayer. Proficiency in goodness will make us know more of God, and to better purpose, than proficiency in knowledge. Goodness will make us love, and love will bring us into Gods secret place, where we shall see more, and with more delight, than all notional learning can shew us. What we can know of God in this our exile, is but little: but we may love him as much as we will, he grants us that power; and as our love increaseth, our labour will grow less, and our obedience more perfect. But many had rather seek God, whom they never find: than love, and thereby enjoy him.

CHAP. XLII.

That by Love Holiness is to be perfected.

1. IT is a commandment of God, both in the Law and the Gospel, *be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* That is, that we should be pure, and without the unclean mixture of the creatures. For as Lead in Silver, and dirt upon white robes, will debase and stain: so if we ingage our Souls to the world,

world, to things beneath them, we make them vile and unclean, whereas if we lift them up to God by a hearty love, we make them pure and beautiful. A heart whence all ſenſual and earthly things are excluded, and whoſe affections cleave to God, by the unions of love, may with joy and confidence ſay with the Apoſtle: *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famin, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perſwaded that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt* Jeſus *our Lord*, Rom. 8. 35.

2. Faſting and Alms, and Corporal Auſterities, the uſe of Sacraments, and all ſuch means, are great helps towards Sanctity; but they all profit nothing without Charity; No, not Martyrdom it ſelf, ſaith St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. The exerciſe of ſome other vertues may be ſometimes diſpenc'd with all: as the poor from Alms-giving, and weak and ſickly people from faſting, and rigorous diſcipline: but to love God and our neighbour, which is the end of all other precepts and the fulfilling of the Law, every one is always oblig'd; no man

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at no time, can be any ways hindred or excused; obstacles and difficulties may stop the progress of other vertues, but they increase Love. Love is within, in the heart and will, there God hath placed it, there God looks for it, and there nothing can obstruct or stifle it, except we will our selves. Love alone is necessary, and alone sufficient to make us holy. It is the first and great Commandment, pleasant and easie beyond all others: for what more pleasant than to love? and who dares say, I cannot love?

3. He that heartily loves God who is one, loves all things in one, and one in all things: for he loves not God truly, that loves any thing, which he loves not in God and for God. There is nothing above, there is nothing equal to God: and if at any time we turn our affections from him, they fall upon inferior objects, upon earthly things, whose weight doth sink and press them down: and our hearts are never at rest and liberty, till they return to God, from whom they ungratefully departed. That we may therefore be truly sanctified, we must forsake our selves and all created things, and return as high as to that first principle of sanctity, that God from whom we had our origin: and then cleaving stedfastly to him by a devout love, we shall become one with him, in life and holiness, and felicity.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLIII.

That the Consideration of the fewness of the Chosen, ought to make us very wary and diligent.

1. NOthing can sooner startle a man out of his slumber and security, and edge him on to amend and order his life by the Gospel Rules, than the due pondering of the dreadful saying of Christ, Mat. 20. 16. *That many are called but few are chosen.* For no man knows whether he be called by that secret election, which intitles him to glory and justification; *No man knows either love or hatred, by all that is before him*; all promises for the life to come are conditional, nothing but our sincerity in fulfilling the conditions, can give us any ground of assurance. And yet how defective are we in this? how uncertain is it that we shall persevere? and who can search and see into the deep secret of his Election? here the Apostle who had been once in Paradise, cryes out and wonders, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom.

Rom. 11. 33. In this great danger and uncertainty every Christian ought exceedingly to fear: and with trembling and an assiduous care, indeavour to make his election sure: living in that Faith which worketh by Love, and declaring by his good works, that he is one of that little but blessed number, to whom God will give his Kingdom.

2. Now that that number is but little, compared with the greater multitude of the wicked unhappy world; nay, that the number of the chosen is but small, even of them that profess the Gospel, and are capable of chusing life or death, we have too many reasons to believe. And our Blessed Saviour intimates so much, when he warns his disciples of the difficulties of coming into that blessed Kingdom of which the entrance is narrow. Mat. 7. 13. *Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.* Then he adds, as wondring at this narrowness; *because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Being also asked another time, *Lord, are there but few that shall be saved?* he gives no other answer but this, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.* Luke 13. 23. King *David* also inquiring, *Lord, who shall abide in thy Tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy*

holy hill? the holy Spirit ſuggeſts this anſwer, *he that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 15. And in the twenty fourth Pſalm, he queſtioning again, *who ſhall aſcend into the hill of the Lord?* he is likewiſe anſwered, *He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, and hath not lift up his Soul unto vanity.* Now, *who can ſay, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my ſin?* Prov. 20. 9. Who can ſay to *David*, I ſhall, for I work righteouſneſs, and I am innocent?

3. Our Bleſſed Saviour ſaith, Mat. 10. 38. *He that taketh not his Croſs and follows after me, is not worthy of me.* Now where are they that thus willingly take their Croſs and ſuffer with Chriſt? or rather how ſadly doth St. *Paul*'s ſaying fit our Age: *All ſeek their own, not the things which are* Jeſus *Chriſts?* Phil. 2. 21. Our Bleſſed Redeemer, who alone hath the keys of Heaven, and knows how we muſt be qualified, before we come thither, affirms, Mat. 18. 3. *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Which ſaying if compared with the pride of men, it will be found that but a few by meekneſs and humility, ſeek to become children, to be heirs of the Heavenly Kingdome. It is declar'd by St. *Paul*, Rom. 8. 29. *That thoſe whom God foreknew, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son.* But who

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is the man can boast that his life is conform to the Life of Christ? and who is he that suffers with Christ, that he may be with him glorified? It is a saying that belongs to all, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments*, Mat. 19. 17. *But they are all gone out of the way, they are altogether become abominable, there is none that doth good, no, not one*, Psal. 14. 3. *The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence* (saith the King of Heaven, *Mat.* 11. 12.) *and the violent take it by force*: Now this violence being against Nature, there are but few that will offer it to themselves, by forgoing any present sensual satisfaction, on the account of that Kingdom which is out of the reach of sense, not now to be enjoyed, but expected only by Faith. If all our Righteousnesses are as filthy rags, as the Prophet saith, *Isa.* 64. 6. What are then our sins and iniquities? *If the Righteous scarcely shall be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* 1 Pet. 4. 18.

4. None but eight persons of the old world, were saved with *Noah* in the Ark; all the rest of mankind perisht in the floud. *Lot* alone with his wife and two daughters escaped the conflagration of the infamous Cities, all the other Inhabitants were consumed by the revenging flames. And of six hundred thousand Jews that came out of *Egypt*, two only, *Caleb* and *Joshua*, came into the Land of Promise. Now those things

things were examples, repreſentations of things to come: denoting that the number of thoſe that come to life, is but ſmall, in reſpect of the greater number of ſuch as go to perdition. Which is yet further but too evident, by conſidering how moſt men live and die; how few give any certain marks of true contrition. Fear and ſorrow extort groans and good words, and death forceth men to recant, and 'tis much to be feared there is ſeldome any ſincerity in a late death-bed repentance. For how can he begin to live well, that is now dying? how can he heartily deteſt thoſe pleaſures of ſin, which he loved and enjoyed, as long as he liv'd? how hardly will he now be a true penitent, who before abhorred all the mortifications of true penitence? how will his reſolutions be prov'd effectual, if he ſhould eſcape, for the forſaking thoſe ſins, which cuſtom hath made habitual, and almoſt a ſecond nature? how ſhall now his ſenſual mind lift up it ſelf to thoſe ſpiritual heavenly things, which he before ſeldom or never regarded? and how ſhall he ſtraitned by time and ſad circumſtances, exerciſe thoſe vertues contrary to the ſins he repents of, to make it appear by his life that there is a change in his heart?

5. 'Tis known by experience that very few, when the pains and the danger is over,

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ſtand to thoſe reſolves and promiſes which they made in the day of ſorrow. Generally men forget and are aſham'd afterwards of what they promiſed and reſolv'd: and they ſoon return to their cuſtomary vices and beloved vanities: Eſpecially becauſe there is ſtill a ſecret reſerve in thoſe reſolutions of amendment made in their diſtreſs, there being ſtill ſome hope of an eſcape, till they are at the worſt, and then they are altogether paſſive, and can act no longer; or at the beſt their ſtrength and rational faculties are ſo weakned, there are ſuch anxious fears and trepidations when the Soul is nigh to depart, that men are almoſt diſtracted, and know not what they do. We may hope well of them, who though they liv'd ill, yet gave ſigns of repentance when they were dying: But this is a deſperate venture, there is much of uncertainty, and nothing of ſafety in their condition. We have a ſad example of this in King *Antiochus*; read *Maccab.* 9. what vows he made, while he was under his grievous ſickneſs. He thought himſelf in earneſt, no doubt, but God knew the unſincerity of his heart, that his repentance proceeded from the fear of death, and *would therefore no more have mercy upon him*, as the text affirms.

And who can conſider all this, and not tremble? who will dare to preſume he hath nothing to do, and that his Salvation is ſure?

ſure? who in the midſt of ſo many and ſo great dangers, will dwell as in ſafety, and not watch, and call upon God? therefore becauſe the choſen are few, fewer perhaps than we think, let us not go with the many, nor follow the croud: but let us live with the ſmall ſelect number of truly good and religious Chriſtians, that we may have comfort and confidence, when our life is ended; that we may with an humble and well-grounded hope, look up to God, and expect that gracious reward he hath promiſed to his faithful ſervants, to all that ſincerely love and obey him.

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